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## Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
A History of Public Education in Fairfax County .....	1
Josef S. Beery	
Some Observations on Indians in Fairfax County to the Eve of European Colonization .....	22
Benjamin Franklin Cooling, PhD.	
The Brent Family of Colonial Virginia .....	28
Lawrence Mitchell	
Pohick Close—A History of the Site of Pohick Church and the Land Surrounding .....	37
Thomas Triplett Russell	
George Hunter Terrett .....	47
Ralph W. Donnelly	
Spring Bank .....	58
Edith Moore Sprouse	
Minutes of Meetings of the Fairfax Historical Society—1910-1917 ....	68
Ferries and Their Keepers in Old Fairfax County .....	79
Nancy Odum	
Muster Role of Capt. Edward B. Powell Company, 2 Regiment Cavalry, 6th Brigade, 2 Division, Virginia Militia to August 31st, 1861 .....	84
List of Members—Historical Society of Fairfax County, Virginia, Inc., November 1975 .....	86

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John K. Gott, President, 1974- .....	v
Col. George Hunter Terrett, USMC .....	48
Spring Bank .....	57



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# A HISTORY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA, 1607-1865

By JOSEF BEERY  
[West Springfield High School]

[Mr. Beery's paper won first prize in the Society's 1974-75 historical essay competition.]

History II-IV  
June 14, 1974

## PREFACE

This paper was prepared as an independent study project lasting nine weeks for the history department of West Springfield High School. Because of this time limitation the extensive research of primary sources needed to verify all hypotheses could not be made. All conclusions, therefore, are my own, derived from the material available in the time allotted. I recommend that further verification be sought in county court and State records of the early nineteenth century, early Censuses, etc. I hope that further additions to this study can be made in the near future; until the entire history of public education in Fairfax County has been compiled.

I would like to thank Mr. Robert N. McKenney, a history teacher at West Springfield High School, who supplied many of the documents and sources from his own original research. I would also like to thank Miss Colleen D. Robinson who did the typing.

## CONTENTS

Preface .....	1
Introduction .....	2
I. The Formative Years 1607-1810 .....	3
Public Education in the Early Colony .....	3
Public Education in Fairfax County .....	4
II. The Literary Fund Years .....	7
Jefferson Struggles to Bring Public Education to Virginia .....	7
The Literary Fund Takes Hold in Fairfax County .....	10
Education for the Black .....	14
Secondary Education .....	15
The Civil War .....	16
III. Conclusions .....	16
Footnotes .....	6, 18
Bibliography .....	20

## INTRODUCTION

. . . Fairfax County, the nation's 15th largest school system has about 136,000 students attending 168 schools.  
 . . . More than 6,000 classroom teachers are employed . . .  
 . . . One of the nation's largest school bus fleets, consisting of more than 640 buses, delivers over 83,000 students from home to school and back home again each school day.  
 . . . It takes about 1,100 food service employees to serve about 65,000 hot lunches each school day.  
 . . . The school system has an operating budget of about \$155.2 million for this year.  
 . . . It will cost an average of \$1,154 to educate each student in the system this year. This ranges from a low of \$752 for each elementary student to a high of \$3,567 for each youngster in special education.  
 . . . Of last year's 9,200 high school graduates 73 percent are going on to higher education this fall with about 56 percent attending four-year colleges and universities.

—*Familygram*, Fairfax County Public Schools, September 1973.

This is the Fairfax County Public School System. The foundations of this mammoth system were laid almost 150 years ago. This is the history of those foundations and the ideas leading to their creation.



## I. THE FORMATIVE YEARS 1607-1810

### *Public Education in the Early Colony*

The roots of the history of public education in Fairfax County begin with the colonization of Virginia, for it is during this period that the attitudes and values of men who settled the Northern Neck, or what is now Fairfax County, were formed. In 1607 the colony of Jamestown was founded in the Tidewater region of Virginia. After many difficulties, the colony, with the discovery of the commercial value of tobacco by John Rolfe and the rapid influx of settlers, was able to establish a social, political, and economic structure similar to the English pattern. The similarity did not stop when it came to education. England had no public schools; instead, it believed every man should provide education for his own child, through a private school or a system of apprenticeship. The colony of Virginia unlike the colony of Massachusetts or Connecticut, which established compulsory education in 1645 and 1650<sup>1</sup> and the colony of Maryland which passed a law creating county schools in 1696<sup>2</sup>, believed, the matter of education was no business of the state. The explanation for this disparity is obvious. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maryland were all founded because of religious differences with England; to widen the gap of culture and to maintain a unified theocracy, public education in these colonies was necessary. Virginia, on the other hand, was a tentacle of the great nation across the sea, whose settlers' basic desire was material gain. These colonists had no need for a society different from the mother country's, and therefore they did not need a new system of education. This attitude of the early Virginians toward public education was aptly enunciated by Governor Berkeley in 1671 when he reported to England, "I thank God there are no free schools . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Governor Berkeley's exclamation was not entirely correct, for despite widespread disfavor for public education, some free schools were established. In 1643, one hundred years before Fairfax even became a county, Symms Free School was founded in Elizabeth City County by a private philanthropist. Sixteen years later a similar school was opened, Eaton Free School, in the same county. From the opening of Symms Free School until the Revolutionary War, a total of only nine free schools were started.<sup>4</sup> Because of this strong attitude of the early colonists, only a very few attempts were made at providing free public education during the first century of Virginia history, and their results were inevitably insignificant when compared to the needs of the growing colony.

Despite a lack of action in the area of public free education, some progress was made in establishing a basic education for apprentices in Virginia as England took similar steps. In 1619 one hundred orphans arrived in Virginia to become apprentices. With an increase of orphans in the colony, the General Assembly passed an act in 1643 placing the responsibility for an orphan's education in the hands of his guardian. Three years later an act was approved requiring owners to instruct and catechize their apprentices. These benefits, whose extent are very uncertain, were ex-

panded to all the poor when the Assembly established in 1795 that children of the poor would be apprenticed by the church.<sup>6</sup> Probably the main reason for the passage of these acts, in light of the general attitude against education for another man's child, was the fact that these laws incurred no cost to the citizenry. The extent of the education to these apprentices is unsure, and it is likely that a great many went without any instruction in reading or writing.

### *Public Education in Fairfax County*

During the time Jamestown was expanding settlement into the Tidewater area, Fairfax County was still virgin forest inhabited by hostile Indians, according to the explorations of John Smith up the Potomac. In 1649 the land of the Northern Neck was distributed among seven English noblemen by King Charles II. The land changed hands many times and was eventually owned by the sixth Lord Fairfax, Thomas, for whom the county is named. He resided in London at the time of his inheritance, but was so impressed with the land upon visiting it in 1734, that he later moved there. In the period following John Smith's exploration the area became slowly populated by settlers from the Tidewater of English, Scottish, and Irish ancestry. Among these early families were the ancestors of George Washington, George Mason, and other men prominent in the history of the United States. By the time Lord Fairfax established his residence in a mansion at Belvoir the area was known as Truro Parish of Prince William County. As the population increased the desire for a separate county also increased. In 1742 Fairfax County was established from what was Truro Parish. Fairfax County did not retain its size for long, because in 1757, as a result of further population Loudoun County was organized from part of Fairfax County. Thirty years later Fairfax lost more land as it ceded Arlington and Alexandria, to Washington, D.C.<sup>9</sup>

The settlers of Fairfax County were generally wealthy landowners desiring better land as the Tidewater became exhausted, and indentured servants and convicts shipped from England who worked the land for the gentry.<sup>7</sup> These poor, those with greatest need for public education, had no power to exercise their attitudes so their opinions are inconsequential. The attitude of the wealthy, those who could provide education for the poor, was simply a carry-over of the attitude that existed in the early colony—disinterest. Further, the gentry had no incentive to change the educational system since their children were already provided for through tutors. Virginia Andrus' research into Fairfax County's early history revealed that, "the Washington, Mason, and McCarty families of Fairfax County all had tutors for their children."<sup>8</sup> After providing their children with the fundamentals, these families often sent them to boarding schools for higher education. There are no records of these academies or so-called "grammar schools" in Fairfax County previous to 1785.<sup>9</sup> Alexandria did have several of these schools and according to one of George Washington's letters even a girls' school existed,<sup>10</sup> but by 1800 Alexandria was no longer a part of Fairfax County. Despite a lack of desire among the

wealthy of Fairfax County for the establishment of public education, their children were provided an education through private tutors or boarding schools in Alexandria, Georgetown, and even Europe.

In the last half of the eighteenth century the county became the home of many middle class persons who owned "smaller land holdings, mills of various sorts, tanneries, blacksmith shops, wheelwright shops, and stores . . ."<sup>11</sup> These people also recognized the value of education but unlike the wealthy could not afford tutors or boarding schools. For this reason community or "old field" schools were established. Several families would organize and build a school in an old, unused field, hire a teacher, often a clergyman or an itinerant student, and send their children. Although there are no records of any of these schools prior to 1800, these schools were becoming popular in the rest of the state and several probably existed in Fairfax.<sup>12</sup>

The influx of the middle class and one hundred years of settlement did little to change the attitude toward free public education. Virginia and other southern states were an island of backwardness among progressivism and change in the rest of the nation. New England was expanding her public school system. The Congress of the United States stated in the Northwest Ordinance, "religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."<sup>13</sup> Despite what appears to be an overwhelming tide in the United States for public education, Fairfax County stood firm against it. In 1779 Thomas Jefferson, introduced a bill to the Virginia General Assembly establishing a statewide system of public primary, secondary, and higher education. The bill passed but with the clause that establishment was up to the discretion of each county. A letter to the editor of the *Alexandria Gazette* of 1797 in response to this bill and its adoption is a prime example of the attitude existing in Fairfax County. The writer estimated that twenty schools and twenty tutors would be required at a cost of eight thousand dollars per annum, "exclusive of the price of ground, and exclusive of firewood, cutting and drawing it, and necessary repairs to the school houses." He felt that the program was too expensive and whimsical and that the county should take advantage of the law and not adopt the bill.<sup>14</sup>

In this climate of disapproval of public education, education for the poor was close to nil. Some old field schools probably allowed a few poor children to enroll free of charge, but the number that did was very likely insignificant. There is evidence of one school established primarily for the poor by George Washington at the Academy of Alexandria. In his will he left "in trust for a thousand dollars, . . . toward the support of a free school established at, and annexed to the said Academy for the purpose of educating such other poor and indigent persons as are unable to accomplish it with their own means."<sup>15</sup> The extent of this school is unknown. The law was still on the Virginia State Law Books stipulating that wardens of the church were to apprentice children of the poor. The records of Truro

Parish Vestry book contain a "number of cases in which children were bound out as indentured servants by church wardens upon order of the courts."<sup>16</sup> A law also existed guaranteeing these apprentices a proper education. "Masters were . . . required to furnish their wards with . . . religious training, and instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and such other subjects as were deemed necessary to make a young man proficient in his special trade."<sup>17</sup>

Toward the close of the eighteenth century the United States made great strides in democracy; it seems strange that Fairfax County, the home of so many of the men in the midst of this progress did little to provide its youth with a democratic system of education.

## FOOTNOTES

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Blair Buck, *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952* (Richmond State Board of Education, 1952), pp. 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> Edwin E. Slosson, *The American Spirit in Education* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Buck, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Buck, pp. 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> Buck, pp. 9-14.

<sup>6</sup> Virginia Dowden Andrus, "Selected Phases of Early Public Elementary Schools in Fairfax County, Virginia" (unpublished thesis), pp. 3-7.

<sup>7</sup> Jeanne Johnson Rust, "The Gentry and the Convicts," *A History of the Town of Fairfax* (Washington D. C.: Moore and Moore, Inc., 1960), pp. 14-16.

<sup>8</sup> Andrus, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Andrus, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Andrus, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> John L. Gott and Kathryn Hogan, "Legato School" (unpublished report), pp. 22-23.

<sup>12</sup> Andrus, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Slosson, p. 155.

<sup>14</sup> Gott and Hogan, p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Andrus, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Andrus, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Gott and Hogan, p. 22.

## II. THE LITERARY FUND YEARS 1800-1865

### *Jefferson Struggles To Bring Public Education to Virginia*

The strings that tied Virginia and other colonies to Great Britain for over a century were slowly rotting as colonists adapted, through several generations, to a new land with new demands and discovered a new independence and freedom that could not coexist with the monarchist government of England. In 1775 the hostility towards the crown rose to a peak as Minutemen fired the "shot heard round the world." In the same year the Governor of Virginia fled the capital fearing his life. A revolutionary convention was established in Richmond to govern Virginia, and it drew up its own constitution and Bill of Rights placing the power in the hands of the General Assembly. All over the nation and in Virginia, men's attitudes were changing as they began to consider the new democratic government suggested by their leaders.

As this tide of democracy swept across the country it brought with it ideas about democratic education, in other words free, public education. In Virginia the leader most responsible for these new concepts of democracy, Thomas Jefferson, struggled to expand them to education in his own state. He believed that education is a vital part of democracy, if attempts at tyranny, the original reason for the Revolution, are to be suppressed. Jefferson stated in detail in Section I of his Bill for More General Diffusion of Knowledge:

. . . yet experience hath shown, that even under the best forms (of government), those entrusted with the power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts which history exhibiteth, that, possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert natural powers to defeat its purposes.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Jefferson studied the educational systems of Europe and the United States and proposals of European educators and drew up the Bill for More General Diffusion of Knowledge in 1779. It encompassed the following:

- 1) Free, three-year elementary schools within walking distance of every child.
- 2) A system of selection, whereby the brightest, indigent child of each school could be sent, free, to one of twenty grammar schools (secondary schools). These grammar school students would, in turn, go through a selective process for college.<sup>3</sup>

The bill did not pass the General Assembly upon introduction in 1779, but later, in 1796, a version similar to it was passed.<sup>4</sup> But the stipulations

that made the second version different were the very things that kept it from ever being adopted in the counties, as Jefferson explained:

. . . and in the Elementary bill, they inserted a provision which completely defeated it; for they left it to the court of each county to determine for itself, when this act should be carried into execution, within their county. One provision of the bill was, that the expenses of these schools should be borne by the inhabitants of the county, every one in the proportion to his general tax rate. This would throw on wealth the education of the poor; and the justices, being generally of the more wealthy class, were unwilling to incur the burden, and I believe it was not suffered to commence in a single county."<sup>6</sup>

Although Jefferson was unable to get a comprehensive education program instituted, his actions influenced many men, among them Joseph C. Cabell, Andrew Stevenson, and William C. Rives.<sup>6</sup> These men and many others carried on Jefferson's plans as he turned to more national problems. Nevertheless, they were only successful in passing a bill in 1810, in a legislature still filled with men with a strong disfavor or lack of interest in public schools, establishing a Literary Fund,<sup>7</sup> which provided meager amounts for various educational programs. The money in the fund was derived from "escheats, confiscations, fines, penalties, and forfeitures, and all rights accruing to the state as derelict,"<sup>8</sup> This money was invested and when the interest reached forty-five thousand dollars a year it was distributed, on the basis of population, to local commissioners appointed by the county courts,<sup>9</sup> if the county courts ever appointed them. The legal maximum per capita expenditure per day was set at four cents.<sup>10</sup> Previous to 1822 the commissioners and the state used the money to support higher education and to provide scholarships to private schools. In 1822 the money began to be distributed in the area of the greatest need, primary schools for the poor.<sup>11</sup>

Jefferson, very disgusted with the progress of education in his own state, provides us with a view of Virginia's educational system as of 1820 in comparison to New York's of 1820, in a letter to his friend, Cabell. He states:

Six thousand common schools in New York, fifty pupils each, 300,000 in all; \$160,000 annually paid to the masters . . . What a pygmy to this is Virginia become! . . . Whence this difference . . . From the difference their rulers set on the value of knowledge and the property it produces.<sup>12</sup>

When the United States government paid its debt on one million, two-hundred and ten thousand, five-hundred and fifty dollars in 1816 to Virginia for money borrowed during the War of 1812, this money was placed in the Literary Fund.<sup>13</sup> With this large increase in available school funds, the public education program was accordingly expanded. In 1818 a law

was finally passed providing this money for a system of primary schools for the poor. As had occurred with Jefferson's bill, the county courts were to initiate action.<sup>14</sup> Because of the apathetic wealthy, previously described by Jefferson, little or no action was taken to use this money to establish a school system in Fairfax County or anywhere in the state.

In this same year, 1818, one thousand and one-hundred twenty-seven men out of a total of four-thousand six-hundred and eighty-two who applied for marriage licenses, could not write their names.<sup>15</sup>

A climate of opinion, among those that were educated, urging improvement of the school system began to develop. In 1826 Norfolk lawyer William Maxwell spoke at Hampden-Sydney College and "urged that the present state plan be replaced by real "Primary Schools . . . all over the state."<sup>16</sup> As a result of this desire among educators for better education, and other unknown factors, the General Assembly did pass a law *authorizing* district free schools in 1829. It also provided that the Literary Fund would finance one-half of the salary of teachers and two-fifths of the price of school buildings provided that the county paid the rest.<sup>17</sup> Of course, those in power in the counties, the wealthy planter class, still clung to the aged notions of the early colony that each man should provide for his own child's education, and would not adopt a plan accruing increased taxes.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, of one-hundred and ten counties in the state only six had adopted the plan by 1846.<sup>19</sup>

The changes in the Literary Fund in 1829 were significant in that they gave a greater number of indigent children an opportunity for an education. In 1823 only eight-thousand, three-hundred and fifty-one poor children received any aid while by 1829 this number was increased by six-thousand, eight-hundred and eighteen.<sup>20</sup> But this was still a rather insignificant proportion of those in need.

Virginia and the other southern states were beginning to move, but ever so slowly, with the tide of change that had already established a comprehensive system of public education in New York state. Southern legislatures, controlled by the wealthy planter class, were slowly being persuaded by educators and possibly others that public education in their state was vital. Heated struggles over this issue developed, and one legislator in North Carolina in 1829, even said,

Gentlemen, I hope you do not conceive it at all necessary, that *everybody* should be able to read, write, and cipher. If one is to keep a store or a school, or to be a lawyer or physician, such branches may *perhaps*, be taught him; though I do not look upon them as by any means indispensable; but if he is to be a plain farmer, or a mechanic, they are of no manner of use, but rather a detriment.<sup>21</sup>

Luckily, for education's sake, this opinion was held by only a minority because the southern states slowly, and at the beginning only tokenly, began implementing free education systems. In 1811 South Carolina ap-

propriated some money for schools, by 1822 Georgia had created a system of aid for private schools that would accept poor children and in 1827 North Carolina established a Literary Fund.<sup>22</sup> Other southern states still had no program for educating their poor. Virginia was leading other southern states in the move toward free education but had hardly reached the level established in the North.

### *The Literary Fund Takes Hold in Fairfax County*

Eventually Fairfax County did decide to use the Literary Fund for education of the indigent. The first report of the status of public education in Fairfax County was issued by the commissioners of the system in 1829. The report was very brief and contained the following statistics:

33	schools attended by poor
400	poor children entitled to benefit of the fund,
204	of whom have been educated for different periods,
75	for one quarter of the year or less,
71	from a quarter to half a year,
39	from half a year to three quarters,
19	from three quarters to a year.
\$853.49	received from Literary Fund
\$821.13	$\frac{3}{4}$ spent
\$765.70	$\frac{1}{4}$ for tuition of poor
\$ 30.24	$\frac{1}{4}$ for books, papers, etc.
\$ 25.19	for the treasurer and clerk. <sup>23</sup>

The report indicates that there were thirty-three different schools attended by the poor. It is very unlikely that many of these were public schools established solely for the poor. The majority of poor children were sent to old community and a few private schools throughout the county with money from the Literary Fund.<sup>24</sup> According to J. L. Blair Buck, not a single school was started in the entire state prior to 1846 solely upon the initiative of commissioners with state funds.<sup>25</sup> Of the schools that did exist in Fairfax County, the following community and private schools probably accounted for much of the education of the poor: A school providing a "seminary education" was established by William Brent, Jr. at the Sully plantation. One of several girls' schools in the county was run by Henry Fairfax at his residence at Ash Grove in 1835. The Lewinsville Academy was conducted by Reverend William Maffitt at the manse. One of the most famous private schools, the Episcopal High School, which is still in existence, was opened "near Howard," in 1839. A Fairfax institute was in operation from 1838-1849. A log structure known as Rochford School was operating probably as a community school in Lee district. Another log school, on Popes Head Road was the Popes Head Road School.<sup>26</sup> Also, a large girls' finishing school, known as Coon Cottage School is purported to have existed in the town of Providence, now Fairfax, prior to the Civil War.<sup>27</sup>



Another interesting facet of the report is enrollment and attendance. The report states that of 400 eligible poor children only 204 were enrolled, and that of those enrolled the majority attended school for only one to two quarters of the year. This low percentage of enrollment and attendance is due to the pride of the lower white class. The children receiving assistance were often referred to as paupers and their schools as pauper schools. The small farmer would rather have his child grow up uneducated than accept charity. A Presbyterian clergyman, John H. Rice, in a lecture at Hampden-Sydney College in 1824 stated that the educational system "demeaned the sturdy farmer by making him plead poverty in order to get free education."<sup>28</sup> In the report of the Fairfax County commissioners to the Literary Fund in 1831, it is revealed that many families did not send their children for fear of revealing their poverty.

They [the commissioners] . . . have found it very difficult to get the necessary attendance of such [indigent children] at school, from the negligence and poverty of their parents, not having the means of victualing and decent clothing for them.<sup>29</sup>

The next report of public schools in Fairfax County found was in *A New Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia* published in 1835 by Joseph Martin. It reported that four-hundred thirty-five dollars and fifty cents of Literary Fund monies was spent in 1832 in the county, and that four-hundred forty dollars and seventy cents was spent the following year, a decrease in expenditures from 1829 of almost fifty per cent. It reported only two free schools in the county: one in Centreville (population 220) and one in Fairfax Court House Post Office (population 200).<sup>30</sup> These were most likely community schools which had been taken over completely by the county for educating the poor. The rest of the poor children were probably sent to other community and private schools mentioned before.

By the school year 1838-1839, conditions had improved little and in many cases were worse. According to the School Commissioners report of 1838-1839 there were only twenty-one schools attended by the poor, in contrast with thirty-three ten years earlier. Of the five hundred poor children eligible for aid only two hundred and thirty-four were sent to school. This was an increase of thirty children but an actual decrease in the percentage of poor receiving aid when compared to the number of poor children in need. The tuition per child per day was still set at the impossibly low level of four cents a day. Expenditures in the county, six-hundred thirty dollars and sixty-seven cents, had gone up from 1832 but were still below the level of 1829. The report also carried a list of books used in the schools. They were *Comley's Spelling Book*, *New York Reader*, *Walker's Dictionary*, and *Pike's Arithmetic*. The only statement made by the commissioners was a rather non-committal, "The schools are generally in operation during the whole year."<sup>31</sup>

In 1841 several educational conventions of educators and commissioners were held in the State of Virginia. Primarily as a result of these conventions the General Assembly passed, in 1846, acts authorizing district

public school systems and county taxes for education.<sup>32</sup> Very few counties took advantage of these laws, establishing for the first time free public education for all regardless of economic status, but Fairfax County did, as the Court Minute Book of 1842-1846 states,

"In pursuance of the Act of the General Assembly amending the present Primary School System, this Court proceeded to district the County."<sup>33</sup>

The court divided the county into twenty-two districts, "with due regard to population" and appointed a commissioner for each district with James Hunter as Superintendent of Schools.<sup>34</sup>

The bill establishing these schools in the county made several changes over the previous educational systems beyond simply establishing districts and commissioners. It stipulated that each district build a school within walking distance of all children. An idea pulled straight out of Jefferson's earlier plan. It established the exact courses to be taught in the county, "reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, and physical science." It probably provided for finance directly by the county with aid from the state, where previously all money came from the state. Money was to come from the Literary Fund, interest on the Glebe Funds, fines and forfeitures, donations, and a county tax.<sup>35</sup> When the county actually began to build schools or levy taxes is unknown, but for the first time in the history of the county the groundwork of a comprehensive public free education system was laid.

Fairfax County did not suddenly change its attitude toward public education in 1845. The ruling class of Fairfax County, those appointed by the General Assembly to the county court, had been slowly evolving through the previous decade and a half. The rich planters, those who previously would not provide public education, found their soil once again becoming depleted and packed up their families and moved West.<sup>36</sup> As this mild form of aristocracy moved out of the county the middle class, the next rung of the social power ladder, became the policy makers. The middle class man had always leaned toward public education but had lacked the power or money to implement it, he consequently satisfied himself with community or "old field" schools. These were the men who in 1845 gave Fairfax County public education.

This evolution of the power structure and ideas did not stop with the end of the 1840's, for soon a new trend began. Northerners began moving into the county. Farmers from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan and other northern states were moving south to buy the old plantations and start small farms. According to *Hopkins Atlas* published soon after the Civil War, in the period 1840 through 1865 thirty-four of the one-hundred and forty-six persons who paid to have their names listed were born in the North!<sup>37</sup> These families had been exposed to a public system of education for quite awhile and accordingly desired to continue it in their new home. They naturally joined with the natives

of the county in the push for public education. By 1855 James Hunter, originally of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was superintendent of schools for the county and a Mr. Troth whose family was from New Jersey was a commissioner.<sup>38</sup>

Two of the many new public schools established in the county immediately after the implementation of the new system were Woodlawn and Oakton. Woodlawn was begun in 1846 by Quakers from the North who bought Woodlawn plantation. They used several different buildings as school houses until in 1869 E. E. Mason, later a member of the County School Board, and Courtland Lukins granted one-half acre of land upon which was built a two-room school.<sup>39</sup> The school expanded rapidly through the years and is currently an integral part of the Fairfax County elementary school system.

In 1849 William P. Speer donated a half acre of land and an "old field" school to the county trustee. The school originally stood at the intersection of Route 655 and Route 123 and was known as Flint Hill. When the school burned after the Civil War it was reestablished at the intersection of Route 674 and Route 123 facing a large oak tree, hence the current name Oakton.

By 1850 this movement to provide public schools was spreading throughout the state. Several reasons account for its rapid growth. The first was the migration of ideas from the North and the evolving power structure of the counties, already discussed. The second major factor was the change in suffrage laws that occurred with the drafting of a new Virginia State Constitution in 1850.<sup>41</sup> Previous laws required a free white male to own property to vote. This greatly restricted the number that could vote. In 1829 of one-hundred and forty thousand white males over twenty-one, only forty-five thousand owned property!<sup>42</sup> This new concept of universal suffrage (of course limited at this time to whites) bore with it a concept of universal education (also limited to whites).<sup>43</sup>

The enthusiasm spread to the office of Governor Henry A. Wise, who in the years 1856-1860 jumped on the bandwagon for a better educational system. The governor's attitude can clearly be seen in his statement:

... poor children should have the right to taste the more delicate food of the mind, rather than merely the coarser husks provided by the charity schools.<sup>44</sup>

Governor Wise attended conventions and was successful in getting the entire capitation tax (a fee paid by each citizen) provided for the Literary Fund. Despite this growing wave of change in attitudes, by 1860 only nine counties and three corporations of the one-hundred and forty-two counties and four corporations of the State of Virginia were using the Literary Fund for the new district public school system.<sup>45</sup>

The emerging trends were not drastically changing Fairfax County either. Even though its leaders had gone so far as to adopt a public educa-

tional system, much of its populous was still apathetic. James Hunter stated in his report to the state in 1854:

The superintendent reports, that while some of the commissioners have been faithful and diligent in the discharge of their duties, others have been negligent and inattentive. The children in some districts where schools are convenient have had the full benefit of the apportionment allotted to their districts. In others but a small portion of the sum allotted has been absorbed for want of convenient schools or inclination of parents to send them.<sup>46</sup>

The report also contained several statistics on the status of education in the county. It reported twenty-six schools in the twenty-two districts. This appears to be a decrease in the number of schools attended by those receiving education from the county when compared to the thirty-three schools of 1829. It is actually difficult to interpret these statistics because it is unknown how many students were sent to each school and how many were public or private. Nonetheless, it is known that in 1854 only two-hundred and one of the five-hundred and twenty poor children in the county received aid. This is a significant decrease in the percentage of poor receiving an education when contrasted with the two-hundred and four children who attended in 1829 out of four-hundred eligible. Not only was the percentage of attendance down but the number of days attendance had not improved. In 1829 it was reported that most children were in school for a little over one quarter of the year, in 1854 the number of days attendance was still approximately sixty.<sup>47</sup> It is likely that the stigma associated with the public schools that was so apparent in earlier years was still a contributing factor in low attendance. The real problem in attendance though, was still a lack of initiative on the part of the school commissioners to persuade parents to send their children to school. Despite the changing attitude of many in the county, they were still not strong enough in 1855 to go beyond approving a comprehensive public education system, to actually implementing it.

### *Education For The Black*

The progress made in education for the white child appears enormous when compared to what was done for the black child. Slavery was established in Fairfax County with the early settlers who depended on it to make farming profitable. On these early plantations if the slave received any education it was from the master. Now and then a benevolent owner would set up a small school for all of the children, but it was probably not the rule. Later, when the plantations sputtered out, the slaves either became property of small farmers or became free men living on small plots of land. At this time there was absolutely no opportunity for education.

When Fairfax County approved its education bill in 1845 it provided the black with no opportunities. It specifically stated that all *white children* five to sixteen years of age would receive free tuition.<sup>48</sup>

Attitudes in the county began to change as the influx of Northerners increased. A letter written by a northern settler in the county, believed to be William Sagar, to a relative in the North, states:

The Old Dominion is bound to be redeemed, free statesmen are coming, the black pall of slavery that has hung over the fairest portion of the new world is giving away, and may a kind of providence work by whom he will and chase the demon from this fairy land.<sup>49</sup>

But the attitudes were not enough and nothing was done about the sorry plight of the black children.

About the middle of the nineteenth century civil rights and abolitionist movements reached their peak in the North. Soon, through schools established by missionary teachers from the North, the southern blacks began to receive some education.<sup>50</sup> It is unknown whether any of these schools were built in Fairfax County, but the possibility exists. Later during the war it is possible that the Freedman's Fund built some schools in Fairfax County as it did in other parts of the state.<sup>51</sup>

The state of black education in Fairfax County knew only miniscule, if any improvement during the decades preceding the Civil War.

### *Secondary Education*

Another area of public education, secondary education, because of the fewer number of children eligible, the high cost, and the proximity of Alexandria and Georgetown schools,<sup>52</sup> made absolutely no progress in the county before the war. Poor children rarely completed three years of primary school anyway, so the number of children eligible for higher education was near zero. When a poor child appeared to have a promising mind often times the teacher would take him aside and help him privately after school with more advanced subjects. When this primitive form of secondary education is contrasted with the high school system begun in Massachusetts in 1820,<sup>53</sup> the poor state of public secondary education in Fairfax County and Virginia can clearly be seen.

This is not to say that the children of the wealthy went without. Beginning in 1790 private secondary schools, known as grammar schools, classical schools and academies, began to be established in the state. From 1790-1830 it is reported that seventy of these schools existed in cities of the state. Fees were not cheap and accordingly restricted the schools to the rich. In 1812 tuition was twenty-five dollars and board, washing, and fire were seventy-five dollars at John Lewis' Belle-Air and Llangollen Academies in Spotsylvania County.<sup>54</sup>

Private secondary schools were also established in Fairfax County. As discussed in the first chapter, several of these schools existed in Alexandria prior to the nineteenth century. Many of these schools established in the county prospered for a few years and then were no longer heard

of, such as the Lewinsville Academy conducted by Reverend William Maffit at his manse, and the Fairfax Institute in session from 1838-1849. Perhaps the most famous secondary school in the county was the Episcopal High School opened at Howard near Alexandria in 1839. It is still one of Virginia's most prominent boy's schools.

The education of the rich beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic in this period was widespread and comprehensive, while education in the same areas of a child of equal or higher potential, born to a poor or middle class family, was uncommon and piecemeal.

### *The Civil War*

In February of 1861, with the threat of the Civil War very close, the General Assembly of Virginia began deliberations over the proposal of secession. One month later, on April 12, the war officially began as Fort Sumpter in South Carolina, was fired upon by Southern troops. Five days later, on April 17, Virginia opted to secede rather than join in a battle against her sister states to the south. The people of Virginia held the same sentiment and approved the decision six-to-one.<sup>66</sup>

When Virginia committed itself to the Civil War it sacrificed what little it had of an educational system. A war took tremendous financial backing. The General Assembly decided to break into the Literary Fund, using the income for war purposes and investing the capital in Confederate Bonds.<sup>67</sup> With no state support, public education in the state and Fairfax County ceased to exist.

The people of Fairfax County had no time to worry about schools; Fairfax County became a battle ground. One of the first battles of the Civil War occurred in Fairfax when a Union cavalry detachment raided the town. Union and Confederate troops continued to march through Fairfax County and were here to fight the battles of First and Second Manassas. The small town of Burke Station became the scene of one of J.E.B. Stuart's historic raids. Perhaps the most well-remembered event occurred when Mosby of the Confederate Army raided Fairfax and captured General Stoughton in his bed.<sup>68</sup>

With battle raging on its doorstep and no support from the state it is almost certain that Fairfax County's educational system disintegrated.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

In the period 1607-1865, from the time the early Virginia Colony established archaic attitudes toward public education, until the outbreak of the cataclysmic Civil War that sounded the death knell for progress; public education in Fairfax County advanced. Progress was slow and often undetectable, but changes were made and the skeleton of a public education system was established. As is true with all changes initiated by men, the attitudes of the men in power played a major part in determining the extent and magnitude of this progress.

For the obvious reason that Fairfax County began in 1742 with no system of public education, the county definitely did progress above the bottom rung by 1860. When the county was first established the program most nearly approaching a system of public education was the apprenticeship program through which a few paupers and orphans were required by law to receive a rudimentary education. After more than a century of small, private attempts at schools; and State bills authorizing schools, but ignored by the county; Fairfax County established a skeletal public education system. The new system established definite schools and districts and gave the county the opportunity to support education from its own funds. These schools faced many of the old problems of apathy, stigmatized children, and miserly wealthy; and the new problem, Civil War, to which it was eventually forced to succumb.

The system established by 1860 was several rungs higher than what had existed in 1742; but it was still far from the comprehensive, graded, elementary and secondary, and inter-racial school system at the top. The schools were plagued by a terrible rate of enrollment and attendance. Often less than fifty percent of those children needing an education were enrolled. Of those enrolled many were in school for only a few months of the year, if at all. The black child, the person in the most desperate need of an education to rise out of the perpetual cycle of poverty and ignorance, was not provided for. Those children who were permitted to go to school and did attend, received a primitive form of education in a one-room schoolhouse with no provisions made for advancement through grades or education beyond the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. By 1860 schools were established, but they still were far from adequate.

The successes and failures of the county's school system can be traced to the attitudes and values of those men of power who controlled the county. The county government, established in 1742 and in operation until after the Civil War, was the county court, composed of wealthy citizens appointed by the General Assembly. Prior to the Revolution the attitudes held by these men were often identical to those of the original English settlers who felt each man should educate his own child. Even more often, the members of the court valued their wealth and property so highly that they were restrained from instituting the high taxes necessary to establish a public school system. Following the Revolution new democratic ideas of public education swept the country and were brought to Virginia by Thomas Jefferson and others. These ideas and their subsequent proposals unfortunately ran aground upon the established ideas of those in the government. Slowly and only after many years, this constituency was able to gather strength and influence the General Assembly to establish the Literary Fund, a state subsidy for the education of the poor. The Literary Fund provided only a small pittance to each county for education, and the public education constituency felt a more comprehensive system was necessary. By 1829 the General Assembly was persuaded to pass a bill establishing district free schools with state money but also giving each county the

option to adopt the system, or not. The county option stipulation of this bill and many of the following education bills, shifted the responsibility for education back again to the county court. The court, through a system of self-perpetuation, was still controlled by the wealthy landowners and the upper-class businessmen. These men were still very reluctant to spend the time, energy, and money needed to implement a system of education, a carry-over of the previous attitudes of disfavor toward education in the court. Because of these attitudes progress in Fairfax County, and in the majority of counties in the state, was slow and incremental. By the 1840's major changes in the social strata of the county occurred. The wealthy landowners were moving west as their land grew poor from soil exhausting continuous planting. This shifted the power structure down; the middle-class small farmer and businessmen became members of the county court. These men had always felt a need for public education but had never had the money or power to implement a more comprehensive system than occasional community schools. These ranks of support for education were soon increased when northerners began moving into the county to farm small sections of the land left by the wealthy. These settlers moved from areas where public schools had almost always existed, and felt the need for the same system in their new home. As a result of these changes in the power structure of the county, a comprehensive educational program was finally adopted in 1845. The county initiated a significant program but was still faced with the problems of an apathetic citizenry, stigmatized children, and incompetent officials, all of which posed major threats to its implementation. Not only had changes been occurring in government on the county level but also on the state level. In the 1850's voting rights were provided for the first time to all, regardless of wealth or property. This action naturally strengthened the concept of a right to public education, and new changes were made by the state. The attitudes responsible for the educational system of 1860 were the result of a slow evolution of ideas influenced by democratic principles, changes in the social hierarchy, and the North.

The future was bright for public education in Fairfax County by 1860. The government favored an improved educational system and was willing to act. And the middle-class landowners, the men most necessary for monetary support of a public system, were becoming increasingly wealthy. The Census of 1850 reported only approximately one percent of the landowners owning land valued between seven thousand and ten thousand dollars. By 1860 approximately eighteen percent of the landowners owned land in this range. Many people in the county desired an improved education system and had the money to implement it, but fate ran the other way, bringing war and an end for that time to public education in Fairfax County.

#### FOOTNOTES

#### CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup> William H. Gaines, *A Hornbook of Virginia History* (Library Board of Virginia, 1965), pp. 59-101.

<sup>2</sup> James B. Conant, *Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Public Education* (University of California Press, 1963), p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.



- <sup>4</sup> Richard Beale Davis, *Intellectual Life in Jefferson's Virginia* (University of North Carolina Press, 1964), pp. 31-32.
- <sup>5</sup> Conant, pp. 29-30.
- <sup>6</sup> Davis, p. 32.
- <sup>7</sup> Davis, pp. 31-32.
- <sup>8</sup> Francis Butler Simkins, *A History of the South*, 4th ed. (1947; rpt. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 175.
- <sup>9</sup> J. L. Blair Buck, *The Development of Public Schools in Virginia, 1607-1952* (Richmond: State Board of Education, 1952), p. 28.
- <sup>10</sup> Simkins, p. 174.
- <sup>11</sup> Jim B. Pearson and Edgar Fuller, eds., "Virginia," *Education in the States: Historical Development and Outlook* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1969), p. 1290.
- <sup>12</sup> Conant, p. 33.
- <sup>13</sup> Pearson and Fuller, p. 1290.
- <sup>14</sup> Buck, p. 30.
- <sup>15</sup> Simkins, p. 172.
- <sup>16</sup> Davis, p. 33.
- <sup>17</sup> Buck, p. 39.
- <sup>18</sup> John L. Gott and Kathryn Hogan, "Legato School" (unpublished report), pp. 28-29.
- <sup>19</sup> Buck, p. 40.
- <sup>20</sup> Pearson and Fuller, p. 1290.
- <sup>21</sup> Edwin E. Slosson, *The American Spirit in Education* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), p. 153.
- <sup>22</sup> Simkins, p. 174.
- <sup>23</sup> "Report of Fairfax County School Commissioners to President and Directors of the Literary Fund, 1829" (Richmond: Virginia State Archives).
- <sup>24</sup> Virginia Dowden Andrus, "Selected Phases of Early Public Elementary Schools in Fairfax County, Virginia" (unpublished thesis), p. 23.
- <sup>25</sup> Buck, p. 52.
- <sup>26</sup> Gott and Hogan, pp. 24-25.
- <sup>27</sup> Jeanne Johnson Rust, "The Gentry and the Convicts," *A History of the Town of Fairfax* (Washington, D.C.: Moore and Moore, Inc., 1960), p. 36.
- <sup>28</sup> Davis, p. 33.
- <sup>29</sup> Andrus, p. 23.
- <sup>30</sup> Gott and Hogan, p. 26.
- <sup>31</sup> "The Literary Fund," *House Journal and Documents, 1829-1830* (Richmond, Virginia State Library), pp. 13-22.
- <sup>32</sup> Buck, pp. 53-54.
- <sup>33</sup> Gott and Hogan, p. 28.
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> "A Bill to Establish District Free Schools in the Counties of Lancaster, Westmoreland, Richmond, Prince William and Fairfax" (Richmond: State General Assembly, January 26, 1846).
- <sup>36</sup> Gott and Hogan, p. 28.
- <sup>37</sup> *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including the Counties of Fairfax and Alexandria, Virginia* (Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins, 1879), p. 33.
- <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> Mattie B. Cooper, *History of Woodlawn Elementary School* (1968), pp. 3-5.
- <sup>40</sup> Helen Rector, "A History of the Oakton School" (unpublished research paper, George Washington University, 1953), pp. 2, 5-25.
- <sup>41</sup> Gaines, pp. 59-101.
- <sup>42</sup> Buck, p. 38.
- <sup>43</sup> Slosson, p. 104.
- <sup>44</sup> Simkins, p. 176.
- <sup>45</sup> Buck, p. 56.
- <sup>46</sup> "Literary Fund Report for the Year 1854," *House Documents 1855-1856*, Nos. 1-14 (Richmond: Virginia State Archives), p. 106.
- <sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> "A Bill to Establish District Free Schools in the Counties of Lancaster, Westmoreland, Richmond, Prince William and Fairfax" (Richmond: State General Assembly, January 26, 1846).

<sup>49</sup> William Sagar, unpublished letter (Fairfax Court House, Virginia; March 27, 1859).

<sup>50</sup> Andrus, p. 41.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Gott and Hogan, p. 24.

<sup>53</sup> Conant, p. 45.

<sup>54</sup> Davis, pp. 35, 39.

<sup>55</sup> Gott and Hogan, pp. 24-25.

<sup>56</sup> Gaines, pp. 87-91.

<sup>57</sup> Pearson and Fuller, p. 1291.

<sup>58</sup> Jean Geddes, *Fairfax County Historical Highlights From 1607* (Middleburg, Virginia: Denlingers, 1967), pp. 83-97.

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# SOME OBSERVATIONS ON INDIANS IN FAIRFAX COUNTY TO THE EVE OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATION

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Let us have no quarrels for killing hogs, no more than for the cows eating the Indians corn . . . Your hogs and cattle injure us; you come too near us to live and drive us from place to place. We can fly no farther; let us know where to live and how to be secured for the future from the hogs and cattle.<sup>1</sup>

Conflict has been a proclivity of mankind throughout recorded history. Man against Nature, Aborigine against Aborigine, Indian against White—their stories populate the pages of history books. But the particular lament above was uttered in 1666. The speaker was neither Sioux nor American settler and the locale lay east, not west of the Mississippi as one might expect. The scene was the tidewater Potomac as English settlers drove deeper into the domains of eastern Algonquian peoples.

The saga of Indians in present-day Fairfax County embraced encounter and conflict and cut across both the natural boundaries of forest and stream as well as the man-made boundaries of county and state. It is a story of Algonquian peoples along the Virginia shoreline (the Doags, Taux or Tauxenant), as well as those across the Potomac in modern Maryland (the Piscataways and Nacostins or Anacostans). It also includes Siouan peoples from the Piedmont, Susquehannocks, Senecas, and even Iroquois from farther north. As one modern authority concludes, the culture of primitive peoples in Fairfax “was no doubt identical to that of the Potomac Indians in Stafford County, the Moyaone (Accokeek) group across the river, and the Nacotchtanke (Anacostia) group where Bolling AFB is now located.”<sup>2</sup>

Archaeological excavations at the site of Moyaone, the large Piscataway village just below Piscataway creek across from Mount Vernon, suggest 5,000 years of human occupation of the area. The sequence appears to have

included long periods of occupation interspersed with frequent interludes of abandonment, encompassing seven cultural groups. Naturally, modern American occupancy has placed a temporary capstone on this sequence.<sup>3</sup>

The Archaic Period people set up the first semblance of habitation—temporary hunting, fishing, and gathering camps between 3,000 and 500 B.C. Surface finds of artifacts throughout the Anacostia drainage attest to the presence of this transient group. Seasonal occupiers, the Archaic people presumably lived in small family groups with few possessions that were not portable. Their soapstone bowls, coming perhaps from the area of Great Falls or elsewhere in the area, served as vessels for wild fruits, meat, and fish. Animals for clothing and food were hunted with atlatls weighted with bannerstones or boatstones. Polished stone ornaments, beads, and shells lent a meagre beauty to their lives, but these people were basically simple and rudimentary in taste and technology. They ranged far and wide across the eastern part of the modern United States. Their very simplicity may have accounted for the longevity of their existence.<sup>4</sup>

The Early Woodland Period saw the advent of the first potters which scholars have called "Marcey Creek" and "Popes Creek" peoples. The former group lived roughly between 500 and 100 B.C. While remaining hunters and fishermen basically, they nonetheless developed a coarse clayware tempered with soapstone. The nomadic Marcey Creek types apparently worked some agriculture. Their successors, the Popes Creek people may have moved into the area from the north (their pottery suggests such migration) and they lived in the period 100 B.C.-300 A.D. Their sophisticated pottery and burial remains are more numerous than their predecessors.<sup>4</sup>

A new way of life began to appear about 300 A.D. and it was destined to last nine hundred years. The "Accokeek" (300-900 A.D.), and "Mockley" (900-1200 A.D.) peoples of the so-called Middle Woodland Period reflected this new way of life principally in pottery styles which showed increased quality and finer clay, introduction of pottery pipes (although not necessarily for tobacco), and smaller sharper projectile points—in short, indications of a more sedentary existence. Still, there remains no evidence to suggest the existence of compact, stockaded villages. Habitation of a specific area may have been simply by a few dozen families for several months at a time each year or perhaps for several consecutive years at a time. Agriculture remained secondary to wild game, fish, shellfish, and native fruits in the diets of these people.

The sixth occupation of the area came from the sedentary, agricultural "Potomac Creek" people of Algonquian stock who established large, stockaded villages, roughly circa 1200—early seventeenth century A.D. Aborigines of this period were those encountered by European invaders of the Age of Discovery and Colonization. Their names which have come down to us today include the Piscataway groups along the eastern bank of the Potomac and the Tauxenant bands in modern Fairfax County. Other tribes which enter the saga of those tidewater folk include Siouan peoples such as the Manahoac from the upper reaches of the Rappahannock, the

Senecas from above the Fall line, and the Susquehannocks from the head of Chesapeake Bay.

What picture may we draw of the primitive inhabitants of Fairfax on the eve of European colonization? These natives cohabited in various small, semi-permanent settlements on or near the Potomac and its major tributaries. Evidence points to numerous tiny groups along the Anacostia and Potomac shores within the environs of the District of Columbia. The principal village of the Anacostans was called Nacothtanke and lay on the modern Anacostia flats. The seat of the Piscataway—Moyaone—was located at the confluence of the Piscataway Creek and the Potomac. Other settlements were Tassamatuck (between Moyaone and Nacothtanke) and Cinquestack, downriver from Moyaone.

The Taux or Doags populated the Virginia shoreline from Occoquan Creek northward to the falls. Their precise origins remain obscure with tentative hypotheses advanced that they, like the Piscataways, derived from the Nanticokes who migrated from the eastern shore of Maryland. Counter-evidence from place names and possible settlement sites places their derivation from Siouan tribes in the vicinity of modern Warrenton. In any event, Moyumps or Moyomps was the name they gave to their principal settlement (and "kings howse") on Mason Neck. Other semi-permanent villages were those at Pamassock on Chipawansic Island, on nearby Maryland Point, Namissingakent in the Collingwood-Waynewood section along Mount Vernon parkway, Assaomeck (about Alexandria), and Nameroughquena in the vicinity of the Pentagon lagoon, with further scatterings upriver from that point. Their population has been variously estimated between 40 and 150 souls by the time of European entry into Virginia.<sup>6</sup>

How can we account for this clustering of villages in the area just below the Fall line of the Potomac? The abundance of fish at Great Falls and steatite throughout the area were made even more attractive by the presence of intersecting trade routes including the river itself and the great north-south trade path which passed at the base of the Fall line. Thus the Doags, Anacostans, and Piscataways became the great "middle men" or traders of the vicinity. Such economic activity eventually contributed to their demise since they were caught between pressures of European colonization and trade and the restless wanderings and trade activities of the itinerant Northern tribes like the Susquehannocks. Intense hostility even existed between Virginia and Maryland Indians—undoubtedly stimulated, in part at least, by the desire to corner the majority of the trade market.<sup>7</sup>

These people were all primarily agriculturists. Stockaded villages of pole- and mat construction nestled beside both stream and cleared field where grew crops of corn, beans, pumpkins, cucumbers, various gourds, potatoes and tobacco. Houses vied with refuse pits, drying and storage racks, working frames, and small garden plots within the stockade. Men and women clothed in deerskin mantles and skirts with their naked urchins beside them blended with the ubiquitous Indian dogs and buzzards both of whom served as Indian equivalents to our modern garbage disposal units.

The Indians of the Potomac lived from hand to mouth. Yet their green diet, supplemented with deer, turkey, sturgeon, herring, and even skunk

and buzzard—for nearly everything that moved found its way into the cooking pots—produced handsome, lithe, and apparently long-lived individuals, at least until cut down by the introduction of smallpox, syphilis, measles, and rum from the Europeans. The women smeared themselves with rancid-smelling bear grease and both sexes exerted much energy in ornamentation. Tattooing, pierced ears, and beads were mild in comparison to other decorations including animal teeth, eagle talons, scalps of enemies, and even bear and wolf heads. By our modern standards these people must have looked and smelled frightful!

Life was reasonably spartan with strict discipline inculcated in Indian youth at an early age. Many young Doag boys probably missed breakfast until they could hit a piece of moss thrown into the air by their mothers. But lighter moments did exist for the Potomac tribesmen with dances and feasts celebrating marriages, the return of hunting parties, the corn harvest and arrivals of distinguished visitors and emissaries from other villages and tribes. Torture of captives and even ceremonial cannibalism appear to have provided entertainment at such gatherings.

The Indians of the area practised a form of religion although the Devil or "Okee" received greater honors than the beneficent Supreme Being. Temples ranging in size from 30 to 100 feet long, in addition to altars and images, were erected to honor the Okee. Their burial customs followed a sequel of individual interment initially followed by mass burial in a single pit or ossuary. Certainly this latter solution made good sense for a sedentary people living on the edge of starvation required all the cleared land for subsistence agriculture.

Virginia and Maryland tribes differed somewhat in their approach to government. The Piscataways lived in a loose federation of towns under a chief overlord or "emperor." Assisted by an advisory council of elders, the emperor actually ruled through lieutenants ("Tayacs") or chiefs of the individual towns. Local councilors ("Wiscoes") and an army captain ("Cacucorus") assisted the Tayac. But things were a bit different in Virginia where all tidewater groups owed allegiance to the famous Powhatan as a part of his confederacy.<sup>8</sup> Some thirty well-defined "provinces" paid honor to Powhatan and his chief lords, called "Werowance," directed the activities of six, eight, or even more individual towns in their charge. Government was tyrannical and arbitrary and even the local Werowance enjoyed powers of life and death over his subjects. Townsmen of the two "super powers" on the Potomac remained enemies although the Doags gradually split away from the confederacy due to the distance from the seat of power and finally, Powhatan's death in 1618. Also, constant conflict between Tidewater and Piedmont natives probably kept the Doags, Manahoacs, and later the Senecas and Susquehannocks in constant state of trepidation and semi-warfare. One can readily imagine occasional brushes between rival hunting bands along the upper reaches of Bull Run or in the steatite rich region near modern Falls Church.<sup>9</sup>

On a bright June day in 1608, Captain John Smith left Jamestown in an open boat with fourteen boon companions to explore the Chesapeake region. He eventually ascended the Potomac and notwithstanding Pow-

hatan's orders to his local lieutenants to cut off the exploratory party, Smith found "... at Moyaones, Nacotchtant, and Doags the people did their best to content us."<sup>10</sup> Yet the history of the Doags and Anacostans becomes largely lost after that date in that of their more powerful neighbors. The escalation of conflict between Piscataway, Susquehannock, Seneca, and Iroquois eventually swept into its coils the minor tribes of the area. The whirlpool of inter-town raiding, intensified trade wars over lucrative beaver pelts, and exploitation by the English settlers caught the Doags and carried them to their destruction as a tribe. Apparently they participated in the Hamer-Crawshaw "corn" raid of 1622 on Nacotchtanke and when the tide of European civilization eventually moved into the Fairfax area those new and white Virginians made little effort to buy title to Doag land in the so-called Potomac freshes. Most of the English colonists considered the Doags to be "treacherous, thieves, liars, murders" and avoided contact. Perhaps the Doags carefully cultivated such an image.<sup>11</sup>

Eventually a few Doags wandered with the remnants of other Virginia Powhatans to a refuge on the Pamunkey River. The Stafford County court listened to a case in 1691 which involved a prisoner who styled himself "King of the Doags." He claimed that he had been captured by the Senecas in 1677. But in the end, Englishman, Seneca, Iroquois—all contributed to the departure of the Indian from the area we know as Fairfax.<sup>12</sup> The saga of those primitive peoples ended as perhaps it began—in conflict.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Alice L. L. Ferguson and Henry G. Ferguson, *The Piscataway Indians of Southern Maryland* (Accokeek, Maryland, 1960), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Letter, Howard A. MacCord, Sr., to author, February 8, 1972; also Ben C. McCary *Indians in Seventeenth Century Virginia* (Williamsburg, 1957), pp. 6-7, 10-12.

<sup>3</sup> Discussion of the sequence of habitation may be found in McCary, *Ibid.*, 90-94; Robert L. Stephenson, *The Prehistoric People of Accokeek Creek*, (Accokeek, Maryland, 1960), pp. 1-33.

<sup>4</sup> See Carl Manson, "Marcey Creek Site: An Early Manifestation in the Potomac Valley," *American Antiquity*, XIII (January 1948), 223-226.

<sup>5</sup> The best accounts of the Maryland Indians include Stephenson, *Op. cit.*; Ferguson and Ferguson, *Op. cit.*; Alice L. L. Ferguson, *Moyaone and the Piscataway Indians* (Washington, 1937); Alice L. L. Ferguson and T. D. Stewart, "An Ossuary Near Piscataway Creek," *American Antiquity*, VI, (July 1940), 4-18; T. D. Stewart and W. R. Widell, "The Finding of Two Ossuaries on the Site of the Indian Village of Nacotchtanke (Anacostia)," *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, 27 (May 15, 1937), 213-219; and Howard A. MacCord, "Archaeology of the Anacostia Valley of Washington, D.C. and Maryland," *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, 47, (December 1957), 393-397.

<sup>6</sup> See Maurice A. Mook, "The Aboriginal Population of Tidewater Virginia," *American Anthropologist*, 46 (April-June 1944), 193-208.

<sup>7</sup> Herman R. Friis, *Guidebook: Geographical Reconnaissance of the Potomac River Tidewater Fringe of Virginia from Arlington Memorial Bridge to Mount Vernon* (Washington, 1968), p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Useful brief treatments of Powhatan appear in Editors of *American Heritage, The American Heritage Book of Indians* (New York, 1961), pp. 164-168; John R. Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States* (New York, 1969 reprint), pp. 175-176; and Frederick Webb Hodge (ed.), *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (Washington, 1910), Part 2, N-Z, pp. 299-302.



<sup>9</sup> In addition to sources already cited, the reader should consult David I. Bushnell, *The Manahoac Tribes in Virginia, 1608* [Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, v. 94, No. 8] (Washington, 1935).

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in James Mooney, "Indian Tribes of the District of Columbia," in Otis T. Mason, et. al., *The Aborigines of the District of Columbia and the Lower Potomac, A symposium* (Washington, 1889), p. 259.

<sup>11</sup> Useful, albeit sketchy on the specifics of English-Indian relations in Fairfax remains the classic Fairfax Harrison, *Landmarks of Old Prince William: A Study of Origins in Northern Virginia* (Berryville, 1961 reprint).

<sup>12</sup> As I suggested in *Historical Highlights of Bull Run Regional Park* (Fairfax, 1971), p. 6, we await the results of archaeologist digs to learn more about the Doags in Fairfax. One amateur enthusiast Mr. Alex Smith, has collected random surface finds and deposited them with the Fairfax County Park Authority in Annandale. Little has been heard from the activities of the anthropologists of Catholic and American universities who had ostensibly inaugurated work on this topic. The dangers of site extinction escalate each year as more of Fairfax open land falls prey to housing and commercial development. Awake archaeologists—lest our meagre knowledge of the Doags advances no farther than at present!

# THE BRENT FAMILY OF COLONIAL VIRGINIA

By LAURENCE MITCHELL

The advancement and development of the American frontier was everywhere affected by the presence of a few unusual men, who, by their determination and energy, established patterns which lesser men accepted. That part of Virginia lying between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers which, since 1650, has been known as the Northern Neck, was no exception. The Brent family established on the western shore of the Potomac at the mouth of Aquia Creek a hundred years before the young George Washington came to Mount Vernon, demonstrated the extent to which determination and the accidents of fortune affect the course of history. Giles Brent and his sisters, Margaret and Mary responded to misfortune in England by migration to Maryland in 1638. Ten stormy years later, disillusioned after a remarkable performance in that colony they crossed the Potomac to find a home in Virginia. Reflecting the memories of earlier years they called the home which they established there, "Peace."

Adversity began for the family of Richard Brent of Larke Stoke in Gloucestershire, England about 1619 when his daughter Catherine announced her conversion to the Roman Catholic faith and persuaded the other members of her immediate family to follow her example. Richard Brent's service at the royal court was terminated, two-thirds of the land of his considerable estate confiscated, and his family subjected to the indignities of Protestant persecution. Three of his daughters, Catherine, Elinor, and Elizabeth entered an English convent at Cambrai in the low countries, and some years later Elizabeth became one of the founders of the convent called, "Our Lady of Good Hope" in Paris. In 1638 Richard's sons, Giles and Fulk, and two daughters, Margaret and Mary migrated to Maryland, the colony in America begun in 1634 by Cecilius Calvert, Lord Baltimore, as a refuge for Catholics and others seeking religious freedom.<sup>1</sup>

The Brents arrived in Maryland four years after the first settlement at St. Marys and were immediately honored by the designation of Giles and Fulk as members of the Colonial Assembly. During the seven years that followed Giles served as magistrate, Commander of the colonial militia, Treasurer of the Colony, member of the Governor's Council and acting Governor in 1643-44. Fulk returned to England about 1650.

Margaret Brent's career in Maryland was remarkable. She was an attorney whose name appears frequently in the early court records of the Colony as, "Margaret Brent Gent," a title then given only to males of some considerable distinction. She is believed to have been the first woman in America authorized to practice law and the first in America to demand the right to vote. She may have been the first woman to acquire original titles to wilderness land in her own name and as a result of her own efforts. Margaret demanded the right of suffrage in order, as she said, "to have her voyce in this house (the Maryland Assembly) for herself and as his

Lordship's attorney." Her presumption was denied by the Assembly and that decision may have been the beginning of the decline of the Brent fortunes in Maryland.<sup>2</sup>

In 1640 Father White, the spiritual leader of the Maryland Colony, persuaded the Tayac or Emperor of the Piscataway Indians to become a Christian and to allow his only child, a daughter named Kittamagund, to be baptized and educated by the Brents. Giles Brent married Kittamagund and, basing his claim on the inherited rights of his Indian wife, brought suit in the Colonial Court to obtain title to a large part of the area which had been granted to Lord Baltimore. His claim was denied and the friendly relations between the Calvert and the Brent families deteriorated rapidly thereafter.

The establishment of the Maryland Colony in 1634 was protested by Virginia on the ground that the royal grant to Lord Baltimore was a violation of the earlier grant of the same land to the Virginia Colony. Responding to that protest Baltimore declared that the grant to him included a large part of Northern Virginia which he described as, "that body of land that lyeth between the creek or river that runneth by Potomac Towne called Potomac and the river which runneth by Piscataway river on the north." Although variously interpreted by Virginians Baltimore's claim appears to have included all of the land now in Fairfax County and a large part of present Prince William and Loudoun Counties.

Baltimore endeavored to fortify his position by encouraging settlers in Maryland to occupy the land which he claimed in Virginia including, "that place where Mr. Giles Brent now resides." Brent responded by encouraging a number of disgruntled Maryland settlers to join him on Aquia Creek. The Governor of Virginia supported Brent's opposition by appointing him a commander of militia on the northern frontier. The estrangement between the Brents and the Calvert proprietors of Maryland created by Brent's vigorous prosecution of his wife's claim to Maryland, and his challenge to Baltimore's authority in Northern Virginia became complete. At a time when Virginians were greatly concerned with the threat of Indian attacks from the north, and Governor Berkeley was seeking support for his opposition to Maryland's claims the residence of Giles Brent and his Indian wife at the northern outpost of settlement in Virginia must have seemed to Virginia authorities and all others concerned as an example of the right man at the right place at the right time.

In the Spring of 1652 Brent became involved in a controversy with Wahungamache, the chief of the Indian tribe which then occupied the western shore of the Potomac below the Occoquan River. In the course of that contest Brent arrested the chief and, supported by Gerrard Fowke, John Lord and George Mason, all officials of Westmoreland County, transported him to Jamestown to press charges of high treason against him. The Assembly acquitted Wahungamache and fined Brent and his associates. The record shows that the chief was released because he had previously been acquitted of the charge which Brent made against him. Be that as it may, there is evidence that the Brents occupied the land on Aquia Creek before they had legal title in Virginia and supported their action by a record

of purchase of the land from the Indians. It seems probably that their trouble with Wahungamache was over the extent and terms of that sale.<sup>3</sup>

The official record of Brent patents on Aquia Creek begins on August 20, 1651 with a patent for 768 acres to Lt. Col. Giles Brent. In September of 1653 Giles Brent indicated his foresight by going far beyond all earlier grants on the upper Potomac to acquire 800 acres on the stream in Fairfax County now known as Little Hunting Creek in the name of his son Giles, Jr., then nine years old. On September 6, 1654 Margaret Brent acquired 700 acres described as, "beginning at the mouth of Hunting Creek" and, a year later, a patent for 1,000 acres described as, "on the south side of the Rappahannock river about a quarter mile above the falls."

Margaret Brent's acquisition of land at the head of tidewater on the two great rivers of Northern Virginia where the principal cities of that area were to be established provides an example of the wisdom and foresight of that great lady. While her male contemporaries were contending in the search for land that would grow tobacco she turned her attention to the natural sites at the head of tidewater where the tobacco ships would come to unload their cargoes and pick up the tobacco brought to the docks.

A 1,000 acre patent on Little Hunting Creek issued to Giles Brent, Jr. in September 1664 was conveyed to the Clifton family which held it until 1760 when William Clifton sold it to George Washington who identified the tract as the River Farm of the Mount Vernon Estate.

Mary Brent, who must have been the homemaker of the family, since no record of her public appearance has been found, died in 1657. Margaret Brent's will, entered in the Westmoreland County records on December 26, 1663 conveyed her land in Maryland to her nephew, Richard Brent, and the remainder of her estate, "in England, Virginia, Maryland or elsewhere," to her brother Giles. Giles Brent's will, dated August 31, 1671, conveyed to his son Giles, "all my lands, rights unto lands, and reversions of land anyways due to me in either England, Virginia, or Maryland." "The extent of the Brent family holdings in England and Maryland is not known. Their patents in Virginia covered 10,000 acres.

There is no evidence that Giles Brent or the members of his immediate family suffered greatly from the general hostility toward "Papists" which prevailed in Virginia during their time. The most punitive provisions of the act of 1641 restricting Roman Catholics were not generally enforced and the act was allowed to lapse in a general revision of laws in 1662. So far as Giles Brent was concerned the esteem of those who knew him was expressed by a resolution of the Stafford County court which attested that the County had "21 years of experience of his fidelity in not seducing any persons to the Roman Catholic faith."<sup>5</sup> Public expressions of hostility toward the Brents which appear to have been based on religious intolerance were brief excitements quickly reduced by competent and fairminded Protestant officials.

Whatever indignities Giles Brent and his sisters may have suffered from the agents of the Crown and the Church of England they remained unswerving supporters of the Stuart Kings who occupied the English throne. William Berkeley, Governor of Virginia for more than thirty years, evidently found in Brent a man of his own kind who could be excused for

religious heresy if he did not deny Charles the Second of England. Perhaps the Brents attached more importance to the enjoyment of freedom than they did to public manifestations of their religion. Giles Brent's life seems to have been an unending protest against restraint finally expressed in his last will and testament by which he directed his executors to expend three thousand pounds of tobacco, "for pious uses where and to whom they shall see fit for which doing and how and to whom I will that to none else but God shall they be accountable."

The short life of Giles Brent, Jr., the child of his father's marriage to the daughter of an Indian chief, seems to have been darkened by bad judgment, erratic performance, and misfortune. Given the command of a company of militia in his early twenties he brought discredit to his command and to himself.

In July of 1675 he acquired a dubious distinction when in a display of ungovernable temper, fright, or both, he provoked the incident which triggered the last major Indian attack on English settlements east of the Blue Ridge, known as the Susquehannock War, and the general insurrection of disturbed and angry Virginians, known as Bacon's Rebellion, which was an immediate result of that War.

Until 1675 the Susquehannocks, a once powerful tribe living at the head of Chesapeake Bay, maintained friendly relations with English colonists in Maryland and Virginia. In a struggle with the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy in New York and Pennsylvania the Susquehannocks were defeated and fell back into Maryland where they were protected to some degree by that Colony. In July of 1675 the Indians known as Doags, who inhabited the area between the Occoquan River and the Falls of the Potomac, claimed that one Thomas Matthews, a planter-merchant of Northumberland County and the owner of a plantation near the mouth of the Occoquan, was indebted to them but refused to pay that debt. The Doags killed some of Matthews' hogs, neighbors gathered, pursued the Doags, and killed several. The Doags avenged that miscarriage of justice by killing a herdsman on the Matthews' plantation, a man named Hen, his wife, and a boy.

Colonel George Mason and Captain Giles Brent gathered a force of militiamen, moved into Maryland, and found a number of Indians in a cabin whom they believed to be Doags. Brent called the leader of the Indians out for a parley, accused him of the murder of the Hen family, and shot him. During the confusion and firing which followed Colonel Mason called to Brent: "For heaven's sake shoot no more; these are our friends the Susquehannocks."

Recognition of the tragic error came too late. Moved by the killing to a blazing anger the Susquehannocks gathered their forces and with the Doags and some other hostile Indians ravaged frontier settlements from the Potomac to the James River in an orgy of murder and pillage. Aroused by the failure of aging Governor Berkeley to provide sufficient protection of frontier settlements exposed to such attacks angry colonists gathered, found a leader in young Nathaniel Bacon, and marched on Jamestown to express their anger and frustration. The Governor defied the rebels but was forced by their number to find shelter on a ship in the James River.

Defying all government authority Bacon led his force in an attack on Indians on the western frontier and defeated them but shortly thereafter died of an unknown illness. His death ended the rebellion which he had led and, perhaps, changed the course of history. The Governor hanged twenty-three men who had supported Bacon and his revolt, which many historians have described as a prelude to the American Revolution, ended.

Giles Brent's part in the uprising was humiliating. Declaring his support of Bacon's revolt he assembled a force of Stafford County militia and marched to join Bacon's troops but retired without accomplishing any objective. Apparently governed by second thoughts of the merit of Bacon's cause, or fearful of the outcome, he decided to support Governor Berkeley and assembled a force of those who opposed Bacon only to see his command disintegrate in the field. An interesting account of Brent's debacle by a contemporary has been preserved:

"The soulders were all run away and left him to shift for himselfe. For they haveing heard that Bacon had beate the Governor out o'th Towne they began to be afeared that he might beate them out of their lives, and so resolved not to come neare him. Colonel Brent was mightily astonished at the departure of his followers saying that they had forsaken the stowtest man and ruin'd the fairest estate in Virginia . . . But they being as they thought more obliged to look after their own concerns and lives than to take notes, either of his valleur or estate."

Giles Brent's marriage to his cousin Mary, the sister of George Brent of Woodstock, was the last of the disasters of his short and stormy life. The marriage ended in a divorce said to be the first legally authorized separation of a man and wife in the Virginia Colony. The decision of the court which heard the case was short and emphatic: "He is a terrible fellow. She to have a separate maintenance being mistreated and he arrested for seditious words."<sup>7</sup> The second Giles Brent died in the year of his divorce, when he was twenty-seven, leaving a child named William who died in England in 1709.

George Brent, a member of a respected family in England and a nephew of Giles Brent, came to Virginia about 1650 and settled near his uncle on Aquia Creek in a home he called Woodstock. Well recommended by influential friends in England and supported by his uncle, his adventure in Virginia was a considerable success. Beginning with an appointment as surveyor of Stafford County he became a successful attorney, a colonel of militia commanding rangers in Northern Virginia, Receiver General of Customs on the Rappahannock River, the King's Attorney in Virginia, Burgess from Stafford County, the agent of the Culpeper proprietors, and one of the largest land holders in the Virginia Colony. Brent's brother, Robert, joined him at Woodstock some time after 1650 and became his law partner.

George Brent and William Fitzhugh, a leader of the embryonic legal profession in 17th century Virginia, shared responsibility for the agency in Virginia of the proprietors of the Northern Neck. Together they were able to diminish general resentment of the proprietary, to establish some order

and authority in the allocation of land grants, and to increase the payment of quit rents. They were, however, their own best customers. Watching the advance of settlement Brent and Fitzhugh selected and added to their own estates some of the best land in unsettled areas. In 1686 their office approved a grant of thirty thousand acres, thereafter known as the Brent Town tract, to Brent and three associates, Nicholas Hayward, and Robert Bristow, London merchants, and Richard Foote, whose antecedents are unknown. Brent's name and that of Bristow have been commemorated by the present villages of Brentsville and Bristow in Prince William County.

The Brent Town tract was planned to be a place of worship for whoever might make a home there, and that object was supported by a proclamation by King James the Second which read:

"We do accordingly give unto the Pet<sup>r</sup>s and to all and every the inhabitants which now are or hereafter shall be settled in the said town and tract of land belonging to them . . . the full exercise of their religion without being persecuted or molested upon any penal laws or other account for the same."

The grantees proposed to settle the tract with Huguenot refugees from France and to create a manor of the kind they had known in England to be developed by tenants who would clear the land and pay the owners quit rents during their lives and those of their descendants, but that great project failed because the Huguenots, as well as other immigrants coming to Virginia after 1680, were not disposed to become tenants while they could obtain titles in their own names on the frontier. George Brent's one quarter share in the Brent Town tract passed by his will to his heirs and their descendants. The shares of the absentee English owners were confiscated during the Revolution and some time later sold by the State of Virginia to establish that state's Literary Fund which has served for a hundred and fifty years to assist Virginia counties in the development of educational facilities.<sup>6</sup>

On October 1, 1694 Brent approved a grant to William Fitzhugh of 21,996 acres described as, "lying on the runs of Accotinke, Mussel Creek Run (Hunting Creek) and on the south side of the run of Four Mile Creek . . ." The grant, lying between the present cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, and extending southerly to the present Shirley Highway, was the largest ever made in Fairfax County. Fitzhugh hoped to settle it with Huguenots but again, as in the case of the Brent Town Tract, that hope failed: and the large part of Fairfax County known as the Ravensworth tract remained relatively unoccupied for a hundred years.<sup>7</sup>

The Brents were conspicuous in Virginia, partially because they were aggressively independent, but principally because they were Roman Catholics in a colony that was almost entirely Protestant. There were not many Catholics in the Colony during the 17th century. Lord Culpeper, governor of Virginia reported to the Lords of Trade and Plantations in 1681 that there was "only one Catholic in Virginia." Three officials of the Colony describing Virginia in 1697 reported that, "The number of dissenters in that country are very inconsiderable, there being not so many of any sort as to set up a meeting house, except three or four meetings of Quakers, and

one of Presbyterians." An Italian traveler, reporting his observations in Virginia, wrote that there was, "only one Catholic in Virginia besides the Brents." All three statements were more or less incorrect and it may be assumed that the three reporters were concerned only with persons whom they believed to be influential in the Colony. Catholic immigrants to Virginia during the last half of the 17th century were almost all indentured servants who, immersed in a hostile Protestant society, avoided public declarations of their religious conviction and were therefore unknown.

Increasing dissatisfaction with the government of Catholic King James in England and a conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Maryland in the Spring of 1689 combined to produce an excitement in Overwharton parish in Stafford County, Virginia which Fairfax Harrison, the historian of the Northern Neck has aptly described as "Parson Waugh's tumult."

John Waugh, a quarrelsome and politically motivated minister of the Anglican Church frightened the small community on Potomac Creek by circulating a rumor that Catholics in Maryland had joined forces with Indians in Maryland and Virginia and were planning to slaughter Protestants. Waugh so aroused his parishioners that George Brent, whose life was threatened, sought refuge in the home of William Fitzhugh, the leading citizen of the community. Charging that Brent's home was an arsenal of arms, Waugh's vigilants searched it but found none. At that juncture wiser men, including Nicholas Spencer, Secretary of the Colony, and Colonel Richard Lee and Isaac Allerton, members of the Colonial Council intervened. George Mason, John West, and Waugh were arrested. Mason was suspended as Commander of the Stafford County militia, and Waugh forbidden to preach in Stafford County or elsewhere. Brent's reputation in the community was strengthened by his conduct during the "tumult."<sup>10</sup>

For a while following the Waugh excitement Brent was a controversial figure. In October 1691 the Stafford court heard a charge that George and his brother Robert were "Papish recusants" which it referred to a grand jury. A resolution to that effect was transmitted to the Colonial Assembly but that body refused to consider it and concluded that Brent, "hath by his prudent and good conduct Performed Good services for ye country."

A Catholic mission served by a Maryland parish was established in the Aquia community sometime after 1683 with George Brent's encouragement and assistance. Old Maryland records indicate that the mission was first served by a priest named Hubert or Hubbard who, apparently, lived with the Brents at Woodstock for some time. The Reverend John Carroll, who became the first Bishop of Baltimore, served the congregation at Aquia during the Revolution. Two of the Bishop's sisters married grandsons of George Brent. Leonard Neale, a great grandson, succeeded Bishop Carroll as Bishop of Baltimore.<sup>11</sup>

The Aquia cemetery, which was established in the field where the Brent home called Woodstock once stood, was at one time used as a burying ground for families other than the Brents who lived in the now extinct village of Aquia. Several generations of the Brent family were buried there but most of the gravestones have disappeared. Those which have been identified marked the graves of Anna Maria and Clara Brent, George Brent's daughters, and Marie Brent, his wife, who died on March 12, 1694.



Restoration of the cemetery has been undertaken by the George Brent Council of the Knights of Columbus of All Saints Parish in Manassas. An altar has been erected and a field mass is offered there each year on the feast of Christ the King.

The first George Brent of Woodstock died in 1699. He married, first, Elizabeth, a daughter of Thomas Green, Governor of Maryland, and by her had one son who died early and, second, Marie or Maria, the daughter of Henry Sewell and the step daughter of Lord Baltimore. By his second marriage he had seven children: George, Jr., Henry, Robert, Nicholas, Elizabeth, Mary, and Martha. Several generations of the descendants of George Brent lived in the Aquia Creek community begun by Giles Brent in 1645 and were active in the administration of their estates in Stafford, Prince William and Fairfax Counties. Sarah Brent of the third generation married the fourth George Mason of Gunston Hall late in her life.

The results of the activity of the Brent family in Maryland and Virginia during the period from 1638-1700 were considerable by any measurement. In Maryland Giles Brent was second only to Governor Leonard Calvert during the formative period of that Colony. The confidence reposed in him and the extent of his authority was indicated by the proclamation appointing him Acting Governor. He was to be, Governor Calvert announced, "Lieut. General, Admiral, Chief Captain, Magistrate and Commander, as well by sea as by land, of this province of Maryland and of the islands to the same belonging." As Commander of Maryland militia he was responsible for the protection of the settlement at St. Marys, and the outposts on the frontier at a time when Indian attacks were decimating the population of Virginia.

Acting as an attorney, an intimate friend of Governor Calvert and the administrator of his estate, Margaret Brent was, in fact, a leader of the Maryland Colony for a period of eight years beginning in 1638. If the women's liberation movement ever establishes a hall of fame Margaret Brent should not be overlooked. She was a determined invader of the masculine precincts of her time.

Functioning as a commander of militia on the northern frontier of Virginia and as the unofficial agent of Governor Berkeley in that area Giles Brent was an influential leader of the settlers there for twenty-six years. As his uncle's successor as a commander of militia, as an attorney second only to William Fitzhugh in the Northern Neck, and as the agent of the Proprietor of the Northern Neck, George Brent maintained the position and the influence of the Brent family for eighteen years after the death of his uncle. Although his course was, relatively, more peaceful than that followed by his uncle and cousin he has been described as impetuous, hot tempered, and unyielding when opposed. He was not a success as the Proprietor's agent but the opposition made success almost impossible. The Brents seem to have suffered from a disposition to become involved at the center of contentions and conflict and to express their independence in a manner that alienated friends and made the settlement of differences of opinion almost impossible.

The story of the Brents seems to be a record of inconsistency. Although the members of the family in America had suffered greatly from religious

prejudice and bigotry in England they were unswerving in their loyalty to the English Crown. They were leaders of the proprietary colony of Lord Baltimore until they opposed it. They first opposed and then supported the proprietary authority in Northern Virginia. They were steadfast in their Catholic convictions but in the hostile environment of the Anglican Church they so ordered their lives that they were spared the restrictions and penalties which threatened dissenters by the laws of the Virginia Colony. They gained the support of the leaders of the Colony when accused of "Papacy." Allied to an Indian tribe by Giles Brent's marriage to an Indian princess he and his son exhibited, from time to time, a hostility toward their Indian neighbors which seems to have been unreasonable and intemperate.

Allied by marriage at some earlier time to the Culpeper and Calvert families and constant in their loyalty to the Crown of England during Oliver Cromwell's dictatorship, the Brents were sustained by powerful friends in England and America at a time when Catholics in Virginia were declared by law to be second class citizens. By their leadership they opened the way to tolerance of the Catholic immigrants who came after them and made their place in history by that service.

#### FOOTNOTES

References are abbreviated as follows:

The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography Volume 14, page 245 as 14V245.

Hennings Statutes of Virginia, Volume 3, page 109 as 3H109.

Landmarks of Old Prince William by Fairfax Harrison Vol. 1 page 44 as Landmarks 44.

<sup>1</sup> An account of the conversion of Richard Brent's family in England is in 70V387.

<sup>2</sup> A record of the Brents in Maryland may be found in 16V97; 18V446 and 19V95 and 317.

<sup>3</sup> A record of Giles Brent's quarrel with the Indian chief will be found in 2H149-154.

<sup>4</sup> The wills of Giles and Margaret Brent are in 16V96-98.

<sup>5</sup> A report of the restrictions of the freedom of Catholics in the Virginia Colony will be found in 70V387.

<sup>6</sup> A report of the participation of Giles Brent in the killing of the Susquehannocks and in Bacon's Rebellion will be found in 17V420, in the Journals of the House of Burgesses 1659-1693, p. 69, Landmarks 127, and in the Burwell manuscripts in the Virginia State Library.

<sup>7</sup> The record of Giles Brent's divorce is in the minutes of the Council and General Court in Brent vs. Brent, May 8, 1679.

<sup>8</sup> The story of the Brent Town patent is in Landmarks 177-196, and in letters of Robert Carter by Louis B. Wright, pp. 52, 64, 66, 67, 112 and 115 and in 52V94.

<sup>9</sup> The story of the Ravensworth patent is in the Yearbook of the Fairfax County Historical Society, Vol. 3, page 15.

<sup>10</sup> The story of the Waugh excitement is in Landmarks 121, 70V404 and in Virginia's Mother Church by McClaren Bryden, Vol. 1, page 111.

<sup>11</sup> For a record of the establishment of the mission and cemetery at Woodstock see 18V224. An exhaustive genealogical record of the Brent family beginning with Odo de Brent of the Doomsday Book and including the ancestors and descendants of Giles Brent of Peace and George Brent of Woodstock written by W. B. Chilton was published serially in the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography during the period from April 1905 through January 1913.

# POHICK CLOSE

## A HISTORY OF THE SITE OF POHICK CHURCH AND THE LAND SURROUNDING

BY THOMAS TRIPLETT RUSSELL

[Mr. Russell is an architect in Miami, Florida, he currently is writing The History of Fauquier County during the Revolutionary War.]

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Mrs. James M. Sprouse of Fairfax County for information from the Alexandria and Maryland Gazettes, the Alexandria Herald and from many wills and deeds in Fairfax; and Mr. Dudley Shugart Triplett of Ames, Iowa, who furnished copies of the little known lawsuit in Fairfax County records and the original proprietary land patent.

\* \* \* \*

### POHICK CLOSE

On the 10th day of November, 1674, Thomas, Lord Culpeper, then Proprietor of the Northern Neck of Virginia, upon the suggestion of Martin Scarlett of the County of Stafford and Richard Normansell of the County of Westmoreland, gentlemen, granted to them a certain tract or parcel of waste land in His Majesty's County of Stafford, in the Colony of Virginia, subject to the customary terms of agreement offered by the Proprietary.<sup>1</sup> This tract, containing 1,408½ acres, was upon the east side of Pohick Creek. It measured 641 poles, 15 links along its east boundary. The northern and southern boundaries, at right angles to it, averaged about 320 poles. The western boundary, however followed the meanders of Pohick Creek, which meandered quite a bit between the two limits. It was Scarlett's and Normansell's decision to divide the tract exactly in half, Scarlett taking the northern 704¼ acres and Normansell the southern.

There was no description within the patent that would enable one to locate it exactly today. The legal identification depended upon several marked trees that have long since disappeared. However, in dividing the tract in half, the surveyor made a serious mistake, one that was not discovered for more than a century. It is because of this error that we are able to say positively that Pohick Church was built in the northeast corner

of Normansell's dividend, not far south of the line that divided the two sections.

The error made by the surveyor placed the line of division approximately 368 feet north of the position that would have cut the tract exactly in half. It appears from the later litigation that the resulting difference in acreage was  $58\frac{1}{4}$  acres which Normansell gained at Scarlett's expense. Neither was, of course, aware of the fact.

Richard Normansell, in his will dated 4 February, 1683,<sup>2</sup> devised his share to Mary Peirce, John Sanford and Sarah Peirce. He named as his executor his friend, Colonel William Peirce of Westmoreland County. He was probably related in some way to Colonel Peirce, but the connection is unknown. It should be noted, though, that Colonel Peirce's eldest son, John, had married Esther Walker, daughter of Colonel John Walker and widow of Robert Tomlin. By her first marriage, she had a son, George Tomlin.

On behalf of the Normansell heirs, Colonel Peirce sold the land on Pohick Creek to one Mary Clerk, a widow. Upon the death of Mrs. Clerk, it descended to her three surviving daughters, as co-partners. The three daughters were married, respectively, to George Tomlin of Richmond County, Francis Awbrey and John Smith. The Normansell tract was then divided into three almost equal parts by lines paralleled to the north and south boundaries extending from the east boundary to Pohick Creek. Tomlin took the northernmost sector along Scarlett's line, thought to contain  $237\frac{1}{4}$  acres but, in reality containing about nineteen more. Smith took a supposed 235 acres out of the middle and Awbrey the remainder along the southern boundary, supposed to contain about 236 acres.

Francis Awbrey moved to Pohick Creek, where he was active in the early history of Truro Parish. In 1731 he became interested in land speculation in what is now Loudoun County in close co-operation with Thomas Lee. Toward the end of his life he lived at Big Spring near present Leesburg.<sup>3</sup> On the 26th of February, 1741, shortly before his death, he sold his property on Pohick Creek to Robert Boggess.<sup>4</sup>

We do not know whether or not John Smith ever lived on Pohick Creek. On the 15th of December, 1742, he, too, conveyed his land to Robert Boggess.<sup>5</sup> It was on this property, sometime later, that Boggess built "La Grange." The Post Road that ran from Alexandria to Colchester and thence, by ferry across Occoquan Bay, to Dumfries, traversed the property. Boggess operated La Grange as an ordinary for a number of years.<sup>6</sup>

George Tomlin died in Richmond County in 1740.<sup>7</sup> He left his Pohick Creek property to his daughter, Hannah Ann, the wife of Francis Randall. Randall and his wife had a house on the property, but whether it was their dwelling or merely overseer's quarters, is not certain. On the 2nd of April, 1764, Francis Randall and Hannah, his wife, sold this tract, containing, supposedly,  $237\frac{1}{4}$  acres, to Daniel French of "Rose Hill," Fairfax County.<sup>8</sup>

It is unlikely that Daniel French bought this property in anticipation of a removal of Pohick Church from the site it then occupied about two miles south. Daniel French was an astute land speculator and the land probably appealed to him by reason of its strategic location. It was on both sides of the post road, sometimes called the King's Highway, at the point where it was crossed by the Ravensworth rolling road to Pohick Warehouse and joined by the road to Posey's Ferry. He was also too experienced to overlook another amenity. About half way between Colchester Road and Pohick Creek was a hill, rising to an elevation of more than 100 feet, from which could be seen the Pohick Valley all the way to distant Gunston Cove. It would make a fine site for a dwelling.

When it became evident that Colonel George Washington would be successful in convincing the Truro Vestry to build the proposed new Pohick Church on a more central and convenient site, Daniel French offered one at the crossroads within his own property. The Vestry accepted and, in 1767, Daniel French deeded three acres and twenty-six perches to the Vestry.<sup>9</sup>

A resurvey of the Randall tract made about this time, disclosed that the southern slope of the hill which afforded such an excellent home site was, in fact, part of the property that belonged to Robert Boggess. Daniel French persuaded Boggess to sell him a triangular piece of land to protect this site and, incidentally, to give him considerably greater frontage on the Colchester Road. This tract contained 130 acres, mostly from the Smith tract but a small portion from the Awbrey tract. The transaction was arranged before the death of Daniel French, on the 19th of June, 1771, but had not been concluded. Boggess, therefore, deeded the land on the 16th of August, 1771, to Elizabeth French, only child and heiress of Daniel French of "Rose Hill."<sup>10</sup>

It is interesting to know something about this attractive sometime willful, young lady, mentioned so often in the diaries of George Washington. Her mother was Penelope Manley, the daughter of John and Sarah (Harrison) Manley, who lived at the mouth of Dogue Creek on land that eventually became part of Washington's "Union Farm." Sarah Harrison Manley was the widow of Thomas Triplett, who had died in 1737 leaving her with two infant sons, William and Thomas. The elder of these, William Triplett, had inherited the Triplett plantation, "Round Hill," adjoining "Hayfield" on the south. The second son, Thomas Triplett, although a man of considerable means, was then living on land between Round Hill and Gum Spring which he had leased from George Mason. His wife was Sarah Dade, daughter of Townshend and Parthenia (Alexander) Dade. Her mother's first husband was Dade Massey. She was therefore, half-sister of the Reverend Lee Massey, who had, in February of 1767, become the Rector of Pohick Church.

Elizabeth French was fourteen years old at the time of her father's death. His estate was a large one, and she found herself heiress, not only to "Rose Hill" and "Clermont," but also to large holdings in Prince William and Loudoun Counties, as well as elsewhere in Fairfax County.<sup>11</sup>

On the 10th of February, 1773, her sixteenth birthday, she married Benjamin Tasker Dulany of Maryland. Dulany was no fortune hunter. He owned a large estate in Frederick County, Maryland, known as "Buck Hill," and more than 1,000 acres on the Maryland eastern shore. The Pohick property was not, therefore, essential to their livelihood and ready cash had its attraction. The tract then supposedly contained about 364 acres according to the deeds, but, because of the original surveying error was, in fact, larger.

Thomas Triplett, Elizabeth Dulany's uncle, was strongly attracted by the natural beauty of the site and by its proximity to Pohick Church, where his wife's brother served as minister. The lease from George Mason was for his life only and could not be passed on to his children. He was in search of property that might be acquired in fee, on which he might build a permanent home. Accordingly, on the 26th of April, 1773, he bought the place from his niece and her husband which he, or possibly a previous owner, named "Barnaby."<sup>12</sup>

The Scarlett tract, adjoining Barnaby to the north, had, during the intervening years, come into the possession of the Steptoe family. On the 13th of November, 1776, there was a deed from James Steptoe to Thomas Triplett.<sup>13</sup> Since this document was in the lost Deed Book "N," we do not know its exact nature. It might appear that Thomas Triplett then acquired some interest in the northern half of the Scarlett/Normansell patent, but, as the document is not mentioned in later litigation, it may have been a short-term lease. Also in 1776, in Deed Book "N," was another deed from Benjamin Dulany and Elizabeth, his wife, to Thomas Triplett.<sup>14</sup> It, too, seemed to have no effect on the property in question and is not mentioned in later litigation.

It appears that Thomas Triplett moved his family to Barnaby after he purchased it in 1773. He must, as a temporary measure, have improved and enlarged the old house already built there some years before. There is no indication that the ambitious plans conceived before the Revolutionary War were ever carried out. The gathering war clouds would have frustrated his most determined efforts to build the mansion he had waited for so many years. He had served with Colonel Washington in the French and Indian Wars and Washington's diaries bear evidence of his continued friendship with Thomas Triplett. He signed the Fairfax Resolutions and was appointed to the Committee of Safety on the 28th of July, 1774.

Inevitably Thomas Triplett sought service in the Continental Line. On the 27th of December, 1776, when, during the terrible winter at Valley Forge, General Washington seemed to be about to lose his entire army through the expiration of enlistments, the Congress authorized the creation of a number of new regiments. One of these was commanded by Colonel William Grayson, with Lieutenant Colonel Levin Powell as second in command.<sup>15</sup> On the 13th of January, 1777, Thomas Triplett was commissioned as a Captain in that regiment.<sup>16</sup> He was forty-five years old and not in robust health. The rigors of the winter of 1777-78 told heavily upon his physical strength. In January he returned home with his close friend, Dr.

James Craik, ostensibly on a recruiting mission. He found that Mrs. Washington was anxious to join her husband in camp and, against Dr. Craik's advice, consented to escort her there. It was bitter cold. Lund Washington wrote to the General, on the 28th of January, "Mrs. Washington crosses the River today, in order to go to camp. Captain Thomas Triplett attends her there. I fear she will have a bad journey, the roads being froze. . . ." <sup>17</sup>

Continued illness finally forced his resignation from his command on the 29th of April. Washington wrote him on the 8th of June, expressing sincere regret at the loss of so devoted an officer. <sup>18</sup> He died, apparently intestate, before the 17th of October, 1780. On that date an inventory of his estate was filed in Fairfax County by his brother-in-law, Charles Little, Humphrey Peake and Abednego Adams. Even taking into account war-time inflation which had reached its peak of forty pounds in Virginia currency to one English pound sterling, his estate was a large one. <sup>19</sup>

His wife, Sarah (Dade) Triplett, and six children survived him. His only son, Thomas Triplett, III, was only four years old. The Census of 1782 shows that Sarah Triplett was living at "Barnaby" with her children and twenty negroes. In 1785 it is noted that there was a dwelling house and only two outbuildings. Aside from the house servants, it would appear that the negroes were quartered elsewhere. The land leased from George Mason had reverted to the Mason estate with the death of Captain Triplett, but there was other property.

The litigation over the division between the Scarlett and Normansell halves of the patent of 1674 began early in 1787. On the 25th of April, 1787, James Steptoe sold to one John Fowler "700 acres, more or less . . . bounded on the north by Chichester and McCarty, on the south by Pohic Run and on the east by the Land of Thomas Triplett, decd." <sup>20</sup>

Upon resurvey of his purchase, John Fowler discovered, to his considerable chagrin, that the tract, supposed to contain 704¼ acres, was, in reality, substantially short of that amount. On appeal to the former owners, he was told that the land had come intact from the Scarlett/Normansell patent and, if it was less than the correct amount, he should seek redress from the present owners of the Normansell half. Accordingly, he brought ejection action against Sarah Triplett, relict and executrix of the estate of Captain Thomas Triplett, with respect to a strip of land parallel to the division line between them. <sup>21</sup> Apparently Mrs. Triplett was not alert to the danger of this action or was given poor legal advice. The Triplett's had been in undisputed possession of the property for more than twenty years, and any suggestion that her title to it was faulty must have struck her as absurd. She failed to have her attorney in court to contest the claim, and Fowler was consequently granted a judgment by default. <sup>22</sup>

On the strength of this easy victory, he felt it safe to lease 656 acres of the land to a third party, which he did on the 7th of August, 1787, retaining fifty acres for himself near Pohick Church. <sup>23</sup> The following day parties representing the Triplett heirs entered upon the premises and "with force of arms, that is to say, with swords, staves and knives, ousted the tenant from the part of the property they considered to be theirs." <sup>24</sup>

It was probably not as dramatic a confrontation as the transcript of the court action would have us believe, but the Triplett heirs were determined not to yield up the land purchased in good faith more than twenty years before. The case dragged in court through the years from 1787 to 1791, with several suits, countersuits and further alleged employment of "swords, staves and knives." Finally, in November of 1791, the Court set aside the claim made by Ludwell Lee, Mrs. Triplett's attorney, that twenty years undisturbed possession constituted clear title, and ordered a resurvey of the entire Scarlett/Normansell patent, if that was possible.

William Payne, County Surveyor of Fairfax County, met with representatives of the contending parties on the 7th of May, 1792,<sup>25</sup> and found a surprising number of the original markers still to be in existence. With the aid of Mr. Chichester and Mr. McCarty, adjoining property owners whose interest in the proceedings require no explanation, he was able to reconstruct the lines of the original patent without difficulty. The original error was obvious. The Triplett claim did, in fact, extend into the Scarlett tract about 368 feet. Fowler, therefore, won his case and a final settlement was reached on the 24th of August, 1793.<sup>26</sup>

It was, of course, apparent that, if the north boundary of the Triplett land was incorrect, the south boundary must be also. To rectify the situation it would be necessary to bring suit against the heirs of Robert Boggess to recover, not only a strip along the boundary line between them, but also the remainder of the 130 acres he was supposed to have sold to Elizabeth French, part of which, it was now proved, was already hers.<sup>27</sup> However, no action was taken at the time and the Triplett seemed to have cherished the notion that the southern boundary would, somehow, amend itself.

Despite the court record of armed conflict along the borders of Barnaby, Sarah Triplett seems to have lived there calmly during the legal battle. In 1785, the eldest daughter, Nancy, had married Charles Jones Love of Alexandria.<sup>28</sup> In 1795, Sarah Dade Triplett, another daughter, married Major, (later General), John Chapman Hunter of "Contemplation" near Vienna, Virginia.<sup>29</sup> In May of 1790, Thomas Triplett, aged fourteen, was one of the top two in his class at the Alexandria Academy.<sup>30</sup> Three years later, 10 February, 1793, he was apprenticed to Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick, who was to instruct him in the science of medicine.<sup>31</sup> On the 22nd of May, 1798, at the age of twenty-two, he was graduated from the medical school of the University of Pennsylvania, with Dr. Dick as praeceptor.<sup>32</sup> One week later, he opened an office for the practice of medicine in Alexandria, probably at the town house of his uncle, William Triplett, on King Street.<sup>33</sup>

He was not destined to remain there long. On the 28th of July, 1798, President Washington, who rarely concerned himself with appointments, broke his rule sufficiently to pen a short note to the Secretary of War on behalf of the son of his old friend.<sup>34</sup> Knowing nothing of the young man's ability as a physician, he referred the Secretary to Dr. Craik, then the Physician General. Dr. Triplett received his appointment as surgeon's mate on the 14th of October, 1799, and was assigned to the USS "Trumbull" under Captain David Jewett.<sup>35</sup> He served during the "phoney war"



with France, but was back in Alexandria by the 3rd of September, 1803. His uncle having died meanwhile, he opened his office on Royal Street, three doors south of Gadsby's Hotel.<sup>36</sup>

It is quite probably that his mother had died during his absence in the Navy, but we have no record of the date of her death. It may have occurred in the spring of 1801, because he authorized his uncle, Colonel Charles Little, to offer "Barnaby" for sale. The following advertisement appeared in the Alexandria Gazette on the 3rd of August, 1801:<sup>37</sup>

"FOR SALE, Barnaby, that elegant site, on Pohick Creek, about 360 acres . . . 12 miles from Alexandria, 4 from Colchester. The post road, leading from North to South, passes through the land, by Pohick Church; on which tract the church stands. Few farms in the neighborhood of Barnaby can boast of more advantages. It possesses a fine, healthy and pleasant situation, perspective of a bay, formed by the river Potowmack and the creek; has various springs of good water on it, an orchard of fruit trees and a garden, very productive. The dwelling contains four rooms below and two above, with brick chimneys and a cellar. There are also a kitchen and other outhouses.

Thomas Triplett, Alexandria.  
(Col. Little has power-of-attorney)

The sale of Barnaby took place almost immediately. On the 18th of August, 1801, it was bought by Edward Sanford.<sup>38</sup> This sale was also, in a sense within the family. Edward Sanford was the second husband of Margaret Barry, daughter of Edward and Mary (Stone) Barry. Her father had been one of the early vestrymen of Truro Parish. Her first husband had been Harrison Manley, half-brother of Captain Thomas Triplett. She was, therefore, Dr. Triplett's aunt by marriage. When the time came to give title to the property, however, it was evident that, as a result of the Fowler suit, Dr. Triplett could not give clear title to the 360 acres he believed he owned. The long-delayed suit, Triplett vs. Boggess, was filed on the 25th of September, 1804. The Reverend Lee Massey and William Triplett of "Marble Hill," Dr. Triplett's cousin, testified for him, but it is not clear from Fairfax County records what, if any, settlement was reached. Certainly no deed between Dr. Thomas Triplett and Edward Sanford was recorded during Sanford's lifetime.

By 1805 the travellers on the Post Road between Alexandria and Dumfries had grown thoroughly weary of the inconvenience offered by the highly undependable ferry over Occoquan Bay below Colchester. In response to their demands for a more dependable route a new crossing was established over Occoquan Creek, upstream from the ferry. To connect with it, the Post Road was diverted westward near Pohick Church along the long-disputed boundary line between John Fowler and the property now owned by Edward Sanford. According to the Alexandria Gazette, 19 August, 1805:

"This day the mail stage from Alexandria to Dumfries will commence running on the new road by Occoquan instead of the old route by Colchester. This road leads off from the old a little north of Pohick Church, crosses Pohick Creek on a new and substantial bridge, etc. . . ."

This change had a profound effect on Colchester, which was no longer of great importance, and on "La Grange," which was no longer on a main road. Barnaby's frontage on the Colchester Road was no longer valuable but its frontage on the new road along its north boundary was. The location of Pohick Church was easily accessible from the new road, though the importance of the church itself had lessened since the war. The Reverend Lee Massey had retired to his seat, "Bradley," the former home of William Peake, which he had bought in 1769.<sup>39</sup>

Edward Sanford died in 1814. In his will, dated 6 June, 1811,<sup>40</sup> he gave instructions to his executors to divide his land between his three surviving children, Margaret, Joseph and Katherine Washington Sanford, and the heirs of his deceased daughter, Elizabeth Hough Sanford, formerly the wife of Captain Edward Washington. The executors divided the land into four large lots and two small ones which can be described as follows: "41

- Lot 1. Along Pohick Creek and extending from the east abutment of Ellicott's Bridge across Pohick Creek along Ellicott's Stage Road, (Lorton Road), 143 poles; in all 64½ acres.
- Lot 2. Beginning at a point on the Stage Road 143 poles east of Pohick Creek and extending eastwardly along the Stage Road another 143 poles; in all 65 acres.
- Lot 3. Beginning on the Stage Road 286 poles from Pohick Creek and extending along the Stage Road to Pohick Road, thence around Pohick Churchyard to the Colchester Road, and along that road to the corner of Robert Boggess' land. This tract included the dwelling house and 75 acres of land.
- Lot 4. All of the land remaining east of the old Colchester Road and the present Telegraph Road; in all 83 acres.
- Lot 5. A small parcel of 15 acres extending from the centre of the Stage Road, possibly on the opposite side from the larger tracts.
- Lot 6. Another small parcel of only four acres described as "next to Fowler's." This land was at or near the intersection of the Stage Road and Pohick Road. We know that Fowler had retained 50 acres of the Scarlett dividend near that point.

The executors awarded Lot 1. to Katherine Washington Sanford, then the wife of William Henry Lindsay. Lots 2 and 5 went to Margaret Sanford, then or later the wife of Dr. John Wright of Alexandria. Lot 3, the home place, went to the only son, Joseph Sanford. Lots 4 and 6 were divided among the heirs of Elizabeth Hough (Sanford) Washington. They were Margaret Sanford Washington, who married before 1820, Eli Offutt; John; Elizabeth Catherine; Edward L.; George M.; Joseph Hough; and Mary Ann Washington, who married before 1823, Mortimer McIlhaney.

The estate was still undisturbed on the 4th of September, 1818, possibly as a result of the difficulty in obtaining clear title.<sup>42</sup> On that day the Alexandria Herald listed among its court notices a "Petition to the Assembly to sell part of Barnaby in Fairfax County, late property of Edward Sanford, decd., (to) which the infant heirs of Edward Washington are entitled." Presumably the petition was granted.

On the 4th of December, 1820, Joseph Sanford sold Lot 3, his share of his father's estate, to Eli Offutt, husband of his niece, Margaret Sanford Washington.<sup>43</sup> On the 4th of July, 1821, William Lindsay, Jr. and Maria, his wife, conveyed for \$1.00 "their one fourth interest in Barnaby on Pohick." "Just how he could claim a one-fourth interest in Barnaby is a mystery. He was a son of Opie and Margaret (Lamkin) Lindsay of "The Mount" and had married his first cousin, Maria, daughter of Colonel William and Ann (Calvert) Lindsay of "Laurel Hill." He lived at "Marble Hill," which he had purchased from his sister-in-law, Susannah (Lindsay) Triplett, widow of Captain Thomas Triplett's nephew, William Triplett, Jr. He may have held a mortgage on part of Barnaby.

There was still no recorded deed to Barnaby in the hands of the Sanford executors in January of 1823. Fortunately Dr. Triplett, then living in Fauquier County, was perfectly willing to rectify the situation. We note that the total area of the six lots laid out by the executors came to only 306½ acres. We can, therefore, assume that little, if any, land was recovered from the Bogges heirs and that Dr. Triplett was forced to face the realities that existed. In January of 1823 he deeded the land in four separate parcels to the surviving heirs or assigns of Edward Sanford.<sup>44</sup> Lots 4 and 6 were deeded to the Washington heirs, Lots 2 and 5 to Margaret Wright and Lot 3 to Eli Offutt. In the last deed there was mention of a previous sale of Lot 3 by Joseph Sanford to Eli Offutt for \$947.12½.

The fourth deed has not been found but, on the 10th of October, 1846, Kitty W. Lindsay, widow of William Henry Lindsay, and her children, all of Jefferson County, Arkansas, sold for \$322.50, to Francis Johnson, all right and title to a lot, part of Barnaby, containing 64½ acres.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile Francis Johnson had bought Margaret Wright's land as well. In the Alexandria Gazette dated 1 January, 1867, there is an advertisement for the sale of 140 acres, more or less, on the Telegraph Road near Pohick Church, where Francis Johnson had resided. Lots 1, 2 and 5 contained a total of 144½ acres.<sup>47</sup>

No further effort has been made to trace the ownership of the lands that comprised Barnaby to the present day. The writer is interested only in the historical background of the land now owned by the Vestry of Pohick Church. However, knowing neither the extent nor location of the land acquired beyond the original 3 acres and 26 perches, deeded by Daniel French in 1767, only a few assumptions can be made. If the additional land is contiguous to the original site, then most of it must have come from the tract deeded to Eli Offutt in 1823. Certainly the Remy necropolis was built on that tract, as well as the manse.

Through fortunate accident, the land on which Pohick Church now stands can be documented through three hundred years. For two hundred

of those years it has been graced by one of the masterpieces of colonial architecture. It, too, has been preserved through the vicissitudes of war, neglect and decay when so many historic landmarks perished. Today the building stands on historic ground, safe at last in the hands of those who will protect and cherish it for the foreseeable future.

#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Fairfax Co. DB K-1, 1772-73, p. 325.
- <sup>2</sup> Fairfax Co. Land Causes, 1788-1824, p. 24-34.
- <sup>3</sup> "Landmarks of Old Prince William," Harrison, p. 153.
- <sup>4</sup> Fairfax Co. DB K-1, p. 327. Deed in Pr. Wm. Co. destroyed.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid. Deed in Fairfax Co.
- <sup>6</sup> Fairfax Co. Order Books 1749-54, pp. 98, 68, 204; L756-63, pp. 227, 402, 514, 613, 667.
- <sup>7</sup> Richmond Co. Will mentioned in Fairfax Co. DB K-1, p. 326.
- <sup>8</sup> Fairfax Co. DB K-1, p. 329.
- <sup>9</sup> The price was £3.6.4, or about a guinea an acre.
- <sup>10</sup> Fairfax Co. DB K-1, p. 327.
- <sup>11</sup> Fairfax Co. WB C-1, 1767-76, pp. 134-36.
- <sup>12</sup> Fairfax Co. DB I & K, pp. 325-30.
- <sup>13</sup> Virginia Gazette, 4 Aug. 1774, p. 2, col. 2.
- <sup>14</sup> Fairfax Co. DB N, p. 1. (lost, index only remains.)
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid. pp. 177-79.
- <sup>16</sup> "Diaries of George Washington," ed. Fitzpatrick, Vols. 1 & 2.
- <sup>17</sup> Payroll Records, Grayson's Regt., Capt. Triplett's Co. 1777-78.
- <sup>18</sup> "Potomac Squire," Thane, p. 179.
- <sup>19</sup> Writings of Washington, ed. Fitzpatrick, Vol. 12, p. 36.
- <sup>20</sup> Fairfax Co. WB D, pp. 14, 43.
- <sup>21</sup> Fairfax Co. DB M-1, p. 248; DB Q-1, p. 124.
- <sup>22</sup> Fairfax Co. Land Causes, 1788-1824, p. 29.
- <sup>23</sup> Fairfax Co. Order Book, 1788-92, p. 300.
- <sup>24</sup> Fairfax Co. Land Causes, 1788-1824, p. 28.
- <sup>25</sup> The account says that Thomas Triplett, aged 11, did the ousting.
- <sup>26</sup> Fairfax Co. Land Causes, 1788-1824, p. 30.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 34.
- <sup>28</sup> Triplett vs. Boggess, not recorded after 4 Apr. 1806.
- <sup>29</sup> Fairfax Co. WB E, p. 120. Guardian bond for Nancy Triplett.
- <sup>30</sup> American Pub. U., Vol. 10, William & Mary College.
- <sup>31</sup> Alexandria Gazette, 6 May, 1790.
- <sup>32</sup> Fairfax Co. Order Book, 10 Feb. 1793.
- <sup>33</sup> Alexandria Gazette, 29 May, 1798.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid, 16 June, 1798. William Triplett bought a house on King Street from Valentine Peers, 12 Sept. 1791. DC D-4, p. 1373.
- <sup>35</sup> "Writings of Washington," ed. Fitzpatrick, 28 June, 1798.
- <sup>36</sup> U. S. Navy, Office of Naval Records, Washington, D. C.
- <sup>37</sup> Alexandria Gazette, 3 Sept. 1803.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid. 3 Aug. 1801.
- <sup>39</sup> There is no record of this sale in Fairfax Co.
- <sup>40</sup> Fairfax Co. DB G-1, p. 313.
- <sup>41</sup> Fairfax Co. WB K-1, p. 214.
- <sup>42</sup> Descriptions are from later deeds.
- <sup>43</sup> Fairfax Co. Alexandria Herald, 4 Sept. 1818.
- <sup>44</sup> Fairfax Co. DB U-2, p. 216, refers to this deed.
- <sup>45</sup> Fairfax Co. DB D-4, p. 344.
- <sup>46</sup> Fairfax Co. DB U-2, pp. 207, 211, 216. Triplett/Sanford agreement, DB D-2, p. 82. (missing).
- <sup>47</sup> Fairfax Co. DB L-3, p. 255.
- <sup>48</sup> Alexandria Gazette, 1 Jan. 1867.

# GEORGE HUNTER TERRETT

BY RALPH W. DONNELLY

One of the most outstanding officers of what might be termed the middle period of the history of the United States Marine Corps was the Virginia-born George Hunter Terrett.

Born in Fairfax County in 1807,<sup>1</sup> George Hunter Terrett was the namesake of his father, Captain George Hunter Terrett, who had married Hannah Butler Ashton, daughter of Burditt and Mary Ashton of Prince George County, Va., on December 18, 1802.<sup>2</sup>

Virtually nothing is known of Terrett's early life and education, but at about the age of 23 years he received his commission as a second lieutenant of Marines on May 18, 1830, dating from 1 April 1830.<sup>3</sup> A year later he received orders for his first sea duty on board the Frigate *Potomac* (44), Commodore John Downes, bound from Norfolk for the South Seas. Still a relatively junior officer, Terrett was assigned to serve under Marine Lieutenant Alvin Edson.

Downes' instructions were to investigate reports of most wanton outrages "... committed on the lives and property of certain American citizens at Quallah Battoo, a place on the western side of the Island of Sumatra . . ." He was authorized to demand "... restitution of the property plundered, or indemnity therefor . . . , satisfaction for depredations committed on our commerce, and the immediate punishment of those concerned in the murder of the American citizens, . . ."

Quallah Battoo was essentially self-governed, and its people had an evil reputation for plundering and murdering strangers. It was open to the sea and guarded by several small forts of three or four guns each. The local population, including those on the pepper plantations located about four miles in the interior, numbered about four thousand.

Proceeding directly to his assigned task, Commodore Downes assigned Lieutenant Irvine Shubrick, USN, to command the punitive landing force. At dawn on February 6, 1832, the American landing force of three divisions of sailors and 44 Marines proceeded along the beach until close to the northernmost fort. Being fired upon, Lieutenant Hoff's division of sailors began a two-hour action which ended with the capture of the fort.

Lieutenant Pinkham's sailors and Edson's Marines filed off to the left to attack the two forts assigned to them in the rear of the town while Lieutenant Shubrick with Lieutenant Ingersoll's sailors and the six-pounder gun was pushed on to attack the principal and strongest fort at the southern end of the town.

The Marines stormed their fort, and, leaving a detachment commanded by Lieutenant Terrett, formed with Hoff's sailors between the fort and water, and poured in a fire from another angle. Another native fort armed with a twelve-pounder opened fire on Terrett's position. Lieutenants Pinkham and Edson with some of their men were then diverted to this newly revealed enemy and forced him to abandon the position.



PORTRAIT—COLONEL GEORGE HUNTER TERRETT, USMC.

*George Hunter Terrett late Captain and Brevet Major USMC, Major CSMC, Colonel PACSA. Color slide provided by Mrs. Catherine Terrett Parsons, 2706 Cathedral Avenue, Washington 8, D. C. Original portrait owned by Mrs. Everett Brockman, 4504 Sunnyside Road, Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

Both Marine officers, Edson and Terrett, were commended by Lieutenant Shubrick for their promptness in forming the Marines and in assisting and forming the other divisions of the landing party.

The engagement of Quallah Battoo brought a statement from President Andrew Jackson of "... his highest commendation for the coolness, firmness, and skill evinced by yourself [Commodore Downes], officers, and men, in the whole attack; and hopes that the best consequences to our trade and national character will result from it, in that region of the world."<sup>4</sup>

Terrett, in his third year as a Marine officer, had entered on the pages of Marine Corps history.

An Act of Congress on June 30, 1834, not only increased the strength of the Marine Corps but clarified the anomalous position of the Corps by placing it under the Secretary of the Navy, but giving the President authority to order the Marines to duty with the Army.<sup>5</sup>

An opportunity to serve with the Army presented itself shortly afterwards in the need for troops to fight in the Second Seminole War. Commandant Archibald Henderson volunteered his personal services along with those of a regiment of Marines. The President accepted the offers, and the Commandant left Headquarters on June 1, 1836, to command his Marines in the field.<sup>6</sup>

Terrett transferred from Gosport [Norfolk], Va., to Headquarters on April 17, 1836, and within seven weeks was on his way south, first as a lieutenant of Company G, and by January 31, 1837, in command of Company E in East Florida.<sup>7</sup>

After approximately one year in Georgia and Florida, Colonel Henderson, part of his staff, and all but two companies of Marines departed for Washington City on May 23, 1837. The two companies, consisting of 189 officers and men, were commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Miller with Captain William Dulany and First Lieutenant Terrett as company commanders.<sup>8</sup>

In June 1837, General Jessup seized about 90 exiles who were confined within the lines at Tampa Bay and ordered them sent to New Orleans under the charge of Lieutenant Terrett. He was detached on June 2 from Fort Brooke (Tampa Bay) to convoy these exiles (Indian prisoners?) to Fort Pike, Louisiana, where he remained in command until relieved on September 2, 1837.<sup>9</sup> Terrett and his company then rejoined Captain Dulany's command at Tampa Bay. Terrett served as adjutant of the Marine battalion for a time, rejoining his Company E on December 18, 1837.<sup>10</sup> Finally, he was ordered north to Headquarters on July 17, 1838, where he reported on the 5th of August,<sup>11</sup> having been in the field over 26 months.

After leave, he had one task to perform before reporting for duty at Brooklyn. The military journal of the day, the *Army and Navy Chronicle*, reported that on "Saturday last" (presumably September 14, 1838), a duel took place at Harper's Ferry between Lieutenant George H. Terrett, of the Marine Corps, and a Mr. West of the Treasury Department. No one was killed. Terrett escaped unhurt, but shot his opponent through both legs.<sup>12</sup> The refusal of many papers of that day to publish news of duels deprives us today of the reasons behind the duel.

Terrett's service against the Indians was not over for in December 1839 he joined the Schooner *Flirt* in Baltimore on her way to Indian Key, Florida. From January to June of 1840, he was on detached service from the *Flirt* at Tea Table Key, Fla. He returned ashore from the *Flirt* in July and was detached on 31 August for duty on Indian Key, remaining until relieved on 31 October and ordered back to Washington.<sup>13</sup>

During this second "cruise" in Florida, Terrett commanded the so-called "Mosquito Fleet" which consisted of three small vessels, two barges, and a number of canoes manned by about 350 sailors and two companies of Marines (541 in all).<sup>14</sup> This Mosquito Fleet patrolled constantly through the waterways of the Everglades in search of the elusive Seminoles. The "search and destroy" tactics employed by the Americans are reminiscent of the riverine warfare of the Vietnam War.

A high point in Terrett's career was his participation in the Mexican War. His promotion to captain (after 13 years as a first lieutenant) was effective on March 16, 1847, and he shipped out with his company ("E") for Mexico shortly thereafter, arriving at Vera Cruz, Mexico, on June 30.<sup>15</sup> The move inland was uneventful until the Marines left Tacubaya on the morning of September 13 and took the road leading to the castle of Chapultepec, the guardian of Mexico City.

Coming to a halt with the castle about 300 yards to the left front, Terrett's company found itself the nearest Marine company to the Castle. The Marines were halted under the cover of some bushes on the side of the road where they became engaged with a large body of Mexican troops supporting three pieces of artillery firing grape.<sup>16</sup> Marine Lieutenant Colonel Samuel E. Watson, commanding the Marine regiment, reported that division commander General John A. Quitman had ordered the Marines to take a position in the Tacubaya road before the castle of Chapultepec to support the storming party. The Marines were then ordered to advance on the road as far as the ditch that crossed it under enemy fire which was returned vigorously until nearly all the ammunition (40 rounds per man) was expended.<sup>17</sup>

Terrett then described his activities.<sup>18</sup>

I left the road behind the agave [bushes], turned the corner, and in conjunction with several other officers, stormed the Battery which had been throwing grape [shot] upon us all the Morning, my position on the extreme right threw me considerably in advance of the rest of the command. What [Lt.] Col. Watson's orders were, whether to enter the gate of the Castle or not, I am ignorant, as I did not receive from him any order or direction, and in going forward, deemed I could not be wrong, as long as the Enemy in large numbers were ahead.

When I passed the gate [to Chapultepec] (to which Col. Watson refers), all fight had ceased at that spot, a few prisoners only being in sight. I pursued the retiring forces of which I speak, up the road leading to San Cosme and when about one-third of the distance had been passed over under a very heavy fire the above named [six] officers and about fifteen or twenty men [constituted my force], the remainder



of the whole number who followed me (thirty-six) being scattered through the corn fields and orchard.

A light battery under the command of Capt'n. [John B.] Magruder came up, and I was ordered to support it, which I did, until he ceased firing, having put to flight a large body of Lancers.

I then proceeded forward, still under a very heavy fire from a large body of Infantry, posted in the Arches [of the aquaduct] and behind a strong breastwork at the head of the road. When within some thirty yards of this breast-work, having cleared the arches of the Enemy, I found the fire was too heavy to be withstood, with any chance of success by the small number of men, not more than twenty-three, present.

I attacked in front, and accordingly Lieuts. [Jabez C.] Rich & [John D.] Simms were dispatched to turn the left flank of the enemy which was accomplished in a very few minutes with the loss of four men badly wounded. The works were carried in front and on the flank at the same time, and the Enemy was pressed up to the Garita [Gate] of San Cosme, driven through it, and it was held for some ten or fifteen minutes by Lieut's. Simms and [Charles A.] Henderson and Lieut's [Ulysses S.] Grant & [Captain John M.] Gore of the Army [4th Infantry], and some twenty men.

Up to this time none of the party under my command had even seen the command of Genl. [George] Cadwallader, and that of General [William J.] Worth only at a distance, advancing up the road from the Castle, and the first I knew of their arrival was an order to recall my men and fall in the rear as our Batteries were about to open.

I did so as soon as possible, and retired down the road under a heavy fire of grape and shell, until I met General Worth and reported to him the circumstances which had caused us to be there, and I asked if I should rejoin my division. He turned to Genl. Cadwallader and said, "I turn Capt'n. Terrett and his command over to you."

I was then ordered to report to Major [John F.] Hunter of the 11th [Infantry] and about one hour afterward was ordered to take the outlying picket Los Nuertos, where I remained three days, until relieved by an order from General Scott, and I then rejoined the Regiment in Mexico [City].

The main body of the Marines under Lieutenant Colonel Watson remained with General Quitman's column and entered Mexico City by the Belen Gate, proceeded to the Grande Plaza, and took possession of the National Palace on the morning of September 14. This building was known as the "Halls of Montezuma," a verification of the first line of the Marines' Hymn.<sup>19</sup> Terrett's Marines were relieved from duty with General Cadwallader at Los Nuertos three days later and rejoined their regiment in Mexico City.<sup>20</sup>

An aftermath of this exploit was the brevet rank of major awarded to Captain Terrett "... for gallant and meritorious conduct in the storming

of the castle of Chapultepec, and in the capture of a redoubt on his advance upon the San Cosme gate on the 13th of September 1847.”<sup>21</sup>

Terrett's Marine service between the Mexican War and the War Between the States was relatively routine. It was during this period that he married Margaret Stuart, of King George County, at Fredericksburg, Va., on February 22, 1854.<sup>22</sup>

The impending War Between the States caused Terrett to be assigned to special service at Fort Washington, Md., from the 5th to the 11th of January 1861.<sup>23</sup> The Virginia Convention adopted an ordinance of secession in secret session on April 17, 1861, and the news leaked out almost immediately. Presumably acting on this news, Terrett submitted his resignation from the U. S. Marine Corps on April 22, 1861,<sup>24</sup> 31 years and 21 days after his entrance.

What Terrett's future might have been had he remained in the U. S. Marine Corps is a matter of speculation. An inspection of Gideon Welles' personal copy of the 1861 Navy Register reveals brief notations of what must have been his original plans for the officers of the Corps.

Not without significance in a day when seniority in promotion was the rule was Terrett's seniority over Jacob Zeilin, the next captain in line in the 1861 Navy Register. Under normal circumstances, Terrett, had he stayed in the Corps, would have been in line to be the Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1864 instead of Zeilin upon the death of Colonel John Harris and the forced retirement of the senior officers. Whether he would have been on active duty was problematical since Welles marked "R" in front of Terrett's name, suggesting that Welles had intended to retire Terrett from active duty in 1861.<sup>25</sup>

Terrett's earliest activities in the War were as a Virginia State officer in the Alexandria-Manassas area. He was first mentioned on April 30 as a colonel of Virginia Volunteers.<sup>26</sup> Brigadier General P. St. George Cocke on the line of the Potomac was advised on May 2 that Terrett would be ordered to him as a replacement for Lieutenant Colonel Algermon S. Taylor (another former U. S. Marine officer), then commanding in Alexandria.<sup>27</sup> Cocke acquiesced, and Terrett left Richmond on the morning of May 5.<sup>28</sup>

On the same day, there was a premature evacuation of Alexandria to nearby Springfield by the troops then commanded by Colonel Taylor.<sup>29</sup> Terrett accompanied the Alexandria troops to Springfield and then back to Alexandria on the 8th.<sup>30</sup> Orders were issued on May 10 for Terrett to take charge of the troops from the counties of Alexandria, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, and Fauquier, and was charged with the defense of those counties.<sup>31</sup> General Cocke especially charged him not to leave Alexandria unless his next in command was "a man of cool, firm, and otherwise able character to hold that important outpost so long as it be possible for brave men to hold it."<sup>32</sup>

General Robert E. Lee ordered Colonel Terrett on May 19, 1861, to take steps to protect the engines and cars of the Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad, constructing a temporary connecting rail link in Alexandria with the Orange and Alexandria Railroad for access to safe territory.<sup>33</sup> The

afternoon of May 22 was marked by a meeting to discuss this link by Terrett with the Superintendents of the two railroads.<sup>34</sup> That same day Lee sent orders for the rail connection to be made via Union Street,<sup>35</sup> but time was growing short. The next day the State of Virginia voted to secede with Alexandria voting 958 to 48 in favor of secession.<sup>36</sup>

About 1:30 A.M. on the morning of May 24, the Federal troops advanced on Alexandria, and the Virginia troops were ordered under arms. Lieutenant Riegart B. Lowry from the U.S.S. *Pawnee* came ashore for a discussion with Terrett and gave him until 9 A.M. to evacuate or surrender. Confronted with the task of defending an indefensible city from a superior force arriving both by land and by water, Colonel Terrett marched his men out Duke Street to the edge of town where they boarded a train for Manassas Junction, reaching there at 11 A.M. Only Ball's small troop of cavalry was lost in the maneuver.<sup>37</sup>

The build-up of troops at Manassas Junction and the temporary shortage of brigade commanders led General Beauregard on June 20 to appoint Colonel Terrett as the commander of the Fourth Brigade, composed of Moore's, Garland's, and Corse's regiments (1st, 11th, and 17th) of Virginia volunteers.<sup>38</sup> On the same day, Terrett was nominated to the Confederate Senate as major of the Confederate States Marine Corps.<sup>39</sup> The arrival of Brigadier General James Longstreet and his subsequent assignment to command the Fourth Brigade on July 2 displaced Terrett.<sup>40</sup> Terrett was then assigned to the command of the entrenched camp at Manassas Junction on July 10 and served in this capacity through the First Manassas Campaign.<sup>41</sup>

Terrett resigned his Provisional Army of Virginia commission on August 22, 1861, to report for duty under his permanent Confederate Marine Corps commission. General Beauregard praised his services in orders, stating:

The General commanding in losing the services of Col. Terrett deems it eminently due to that officer to express his high sense of the value of the services he has rendered to this army as the commanding officer of Camp Pickens, since the first part of last June.<sup>42</sup>

Terrett's activities for about a year are not a matter of specific record, but with the establishment of a Marine camp at Drewry's Bluff (Camp Beall), Va., he was placed in command of the three companies of Marines assembled there. This duty was interspersed with temporary duty at Headquarters in Richmond for courts-martial, the examination of candidates for commissions, and the enlistment of an occasional recruit.

The transfer of the Naval officer in command of Drewry's Bluff (Captain Sidney Smith Lee) in the spring of 1864 left Terrett in command of the post but with only the rank of major of Marines. The Secretary of the Navy was conscious that this relatively low rank left Terrett subject to being outranked by "less experienced and able officers of superior rank" who might be present occasionally. His solution was to request the President

for such Provisional Army rank as might prevent Terrett's command from being interrupted.<sup>43</sup>

As a result, Major Terrett was approved on May 23, 1864, by the President for appointment as a colonel in the Provisional Army.<sup>44</sup> This was followed on July 21, 1864, by orders assigning him to the command of Drewry's Bluff,<sup>45</sup> the so-called "Gibraltar of the Confederacy." Terrett's command of the post continued until March 1865 when reinforcements of Navy personnel from Savannah and Wilmington arrived and Commodore John R. Tucker took command.<sup>46</sup>

Rumors circulated in March 1865 that Terrett was to be promoted to the rank of brigadier general, but the promotion failed to materialize.<sup>47</sup>

Terrett apparently marched out with his men from Drewry's Bluff when it was evacuated on April 2, 1865, on the road to Appomattox, but the war came to an end for him when he was captured near Amelia Courthouse on April 5, 1865.

Colonel Terrett was first imprisoned in the Old Capitol Prison in Washington on April 14, 1865, the day of Lincoln's assassination. He was transferred to Johnson's Island on April 21, reaching there three days later. Although the war was actually over, it was not until three months later on July 25 that Terrett was released on taking the oath of allegiance and giving his parole. At the time of his parole, his residence was given as Charlotte Courthouse, Va.; age, 58 years old; complexion, fair; hair, dark; eyes, dark; and height, 5 feet, 9½ inches.

He passed through Washington, D.C., on July 31 on his way to rejoin his family at Charlotte Courthouse.<sup>48</sup>

In a letter dated February 11, 1866, one former Confederate Marine officer, Fergus MacRae, wrote one of his former brother officers of a visit to Colonel Terrett. He commented,

... then I saw Col Terrett in Washington. O there is a sad case. I don't know when I have been so unhappy as I was during the time I spent with him. To see and know all the misery of his situation & not be able to help him materially was sad indeed. Write to him, Thomson, it will cheer the poor old gentleman. Address to the care of Mrs. Mary A. Paine, . . .<sup>49</sup> [Mrs. Orris S. Paine was his sister, Mary Ashton Terrett.]<sup>50</sup>

The Terrett family home, the octagon-shaped "Oakwood" located near Bailey's Crossroads and Seminary Road, had been destroyed early in 1861, and, when the family returned, the lumber from some old barracks was used to rebuild a small house to which the present house was added.<sup>51</sup> When the Federal troops occupied the area, family legend says a jewel-headed presentation cane was placed in the mail for shipment to New York, but the Postmaster held it out, and it was later returned to Terrett. On the grounds of Oakwood was an immense box tree with the name of George Washington and his cabinet carved on the inside. A Federal Colonel not only coveted the tree but had it cut and taken away. Its whereabouts are not known.<sup>52</sup>

After returning to his family home in Fairfax County, Va., Terrett worked to support his family until stricken by paralysis in the fall of 1875,

secumbing to his illness on November 27, 1875. Reportedly in his 70th year, a birth year of 1807 would have made him about 68 years old.<sup>53</sup>

First buried in the family graveyard at Oakwood, his remains were later removed to the Abbey Mausoleum, just outside the Hobson Gate to the Arlington Cemetery. It is an interesting coincidence that this most famous of "the Old Corps" should rest in a building immediately adjacent to Henderson Hall, home of the Headquarters Battalion, and Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, in the Navy Annex building.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Mrs. Arthur (Catherine Terrett) Parsons of Washington, D.C., to the author, October 3, 1957. Also calculated from age given in Record of Oath of Allegiance taken at Johnson's Island, Ohio, July 25, 1865.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Magazine of History, v. 10, p. 434; and William & Mary Quarterly, Series I, v. 7, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Chronology of Service of George H. Terrett in Biographical File, Reference Branch, Historical Division, HQ, USMC. This source cited hereafter as "Terrett's Service Chronology."

<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah N. Reynolds, *Voyage of the United States Frigate Potomac, Under the Command of Commodore John Downes, During Circumnavigation of the Globe in the Years 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1835), pp. 528-536; R. F. Daley, 2d Lt., USMC, "The Attack on Quallah-Battoo," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, v. 79 (July 1953), pp. 767-71; Karl Schuon (compiler), *The Leathernecks* (New York, 1963), chapter by Bernard Nalty, "Pirates and Pepper," pp. 67-70.

<sup>5</sup> Edwin North McClellan, *History of the United States Marine Corps* (Washington, 1925-1934), mimeo., v. II, Chapter 6, "Indian Campaigns, 1836-1842," pp. 22-23, 122-23, note 57. This source cited hereafter as "McClellan's Indian Campaigns." Also William [Bill] D. Parker, Capt., USMC, *A Concise History of the United States Marine Corps, 1775-1969* (Washington, 1970), p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Col. Archibald Henderson to Secretary of the Navy July 16, 1839, in *McClellan's Indian Campaigns*, p. 122, note 57.

<sup>7</sup> Muster Rolls of USMC, 1836-1837, microfilm copies in Reference Branch, Historical Division, HQ, USMC. The original rolls are in the National Archives. The National Archives identifies their microfilm copies as Microcopy T-1118, Rolls 25 and 26.

<sup>8</sup> *McClellan's Indian Campaigns*, p. 70.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 80.

<sup>10</sup> *Terrett's Service Chronology*.

<sup>11</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> *Army and Navy Chronicle*, September 19, 1839, p. 184.

<sup>13</sup> *McClellan's Indian Campaigns*, pp. 94, 159-160; and *Terrett's Service Chronology*.

<sup>14</sup> John T. Sprague, Bvt. Capt., 8th Inf., USA, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (University of Florida Press: Gainesville, 1964), p. 351. (Facsimile reproduction of the 1848 edition with introduction by John K. Mahon.)

<sup>15</sup> *Terrett's Service Chronology*.

<sup>16</sup> Letter No. 120, Brig. Gen. Comdt. Archibald Henderson to Hon. John Y. Mason, Secretary of the Navy, May 12, 1848, and enclosures No. 4 (Capt. Terrett's statement), No. 5 (Statement of one of Capt. Terrett's company officers), and No. 6 (Report of Lt. Col. Watson). Letter Book, Jan-May 1848, entry 4, *Letters Sent*, in Natl. Archives Inventory Record Group 127, *Records of the United States Marine Corps*. (Copies in Hist. Ref. Br., Hist. Div., HQ, USMC.)

<sup>17</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Lt. Col. Watson's report.

<sup>18</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Capt. Terrett's statement.

<sup>19</sup> Richard McSherry, M.D., USN, *El Puchero, or A Mixed Dish from Mexico* (Philadelphia, 1850), p. 115.

- <sup>20</sup> Henderson to Mason, May 12, 1848, *op. cit.*, Capt. Terrett's statement.
- <sup>21</sup> *The Daily National Intelligencer*, Monday, August 4, 1848, p. 4.
- <sup>22</sup> Mexican War Pension File for Margaret Terrett, widow of Captain George H. Terrett, Application No. 3936, Certificate No. 6823, U.S. National Archives.
- <sup>23</sup> *Terrett's Service Chronology*.
- <sup>24</sup> *Loc. cit.*
- <sup>25</sup> Personal xerox copy of Marine Corps pages (pp. 76-79) in Secretary Welles' personal copy of the 1861 Navy Register in possession of U. S. Marine Corps Museum, Quantico, Va.
- <sup>26</sup> S. O. 95, April 30, 1861, H.Q., Potomac Department (Cocke), p. 91 in *Order Book* of General P. St. George Cocke, MSS. Division, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.
- <sup>27</sup> U. S. War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: G.P.O., 1880-1901), Series I, Vol. 2, p. 796: R. S. Garnett, Adj. Gen., to Brig. Gen. Cocke, May 2, 1861. This source cited hereafter as "O.R."
- <sup>28</sup> Telegram from Maj. Gen. Lee to Brig. Gen. Phillip St. Geo. Cocke, May 5, 1861, item No. 356, R. E. Lee file, entry No. 125 in Preliminary Inventory to Record Group 109, *War Dept. Coll. of Conf. Records*, U. S. Natl. Archives
- <sup>29</sup> O. R. Series I, Vol. 2, pp. 23-27.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25 and 819.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 879: S. O. 39, para. II, HQ, Va. Forces, Richmond, Va., May 10, 1861.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 841: Col. Philip St. Geo. Cocke to Col. R. S. Garnett Adjutant-General, HQ Potomac Dept., Culpeper Court-House, May 14, 1861.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 858: Jno. A. Washington, Aide-de camp, to Lieut. Col. George H. Terrett, HQ, Va. Forces, Richmond, Va., May 19, 1861.
- <sup>34</sup> Col. Terrett to Maj. Gen. Robt. E. Lee, HQ, Alexandria, May 22, 1861, item No. 831, R. E. Lee file, entry No. 125 in Preliminary Inventory to Record Group 109, *War Dept. Coll. of Conf. Records*, U. S. Natl. Archives.
- <sup>35</sup> O. R. Series I, Vol. 2, p. 866: Maj. Gen. R. E. Lee to Col. George H. Terrett, HQ, Va. Forces, Richmond, Va., May 22, 1861.
- <sup>36</sup> William B. Hurd, *Alexandria, Virginia 1861-1865* (City of Alexandria: Va., 1970), p. 11.
- <sup>37</sup> O. R., Series I, Vol. 2, pp. 43-44: reports of Col. George H. Terrett, C. S. forces, commanding at Alexandria, Va., May 24 and May 28, 1861.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 943-44: G.O. 20, para. IV, HQ, Army of the Potomac (Beauregard), Manassas Junction, Va., June 20, 1861.
- <sup>39</sup> *Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the Navy of the Confederate States, 1862*, ch. VIII, vol. 287 as shown on p. 242 in Preliminary Inventory to Record Group 109, *War Dept. Coll. of Conf. Records*, U. S. Natl. Archives.
- <sup>40</sup> H. J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *James Longstreet—Lee's War Horse* (Chapel Hill, 1936), pp. 13-14.
- <sup>41</sup> Field Return dated July 10, 1861, Army of the Potomac (Beauregard), entry No. 65, Post, Department, and Army Returns, Rosters, and Lists, 1861-65, in Preliminary Inventory to Record Group 109, *War Dept. Coll. of Conf. Records*, U. S. Natl. Archives.
- <sup>42</sup> S. O. 258, para. I and III, HQ, 1st Corps, Army of the Potomac (Beauregard), Manassas, August 22, 1861, Book No. 5, *General [and Special] Orders, Army of the Potomac, June 2- December 31, 1861*. Beauregard pp., MSS. Div., Library of Congress.
- <sup>43</sup> S. R. Mallory to the President [Jefferson Davis], Navy Dept., Richmond, Va., May 21, 1864, in personal file of Colonel George H. Terrett, Staff File, CSA Carded Records, entry 193 in Preliminary Inventory for Record Group 109, *War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records*, U. S. National Archives. This source cited hereafter as "Terrett's file, CSA Carded Records."
- <sup>44</sup> *Loc. cit.*, endorsement on Mallory's letter of May 21, 1864.
- <sup>45</sup> *Loc. cit.*, S. O. 170, HQ, Dept. No. Va. (Lee), July 21, 1864.

<sup>46</sup> Lt. Ruffin Thomson, CSMC, to "Dear Pa.," Drewrey's Bluff, Va., addendum dated March 9, 1865, to letter of March 8, 1865, Ruffin Thomson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. This source cited hereafter as "Ruffin Thomson Pp., SHC, UNC."

<sup>47</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Lt. Ruffin Thomson, CSMC, to "Dear Pa.," March 8, 1865.

<sup>48</sup> Prison of War records, *Terrett's file, CSA Carded Records*.

<sup>49</sup> Fergus MacRae to Ruffin Thomson, St. Louis, February 11, 1866, *Ruffin Thomson Pp., SHC, UNC*.

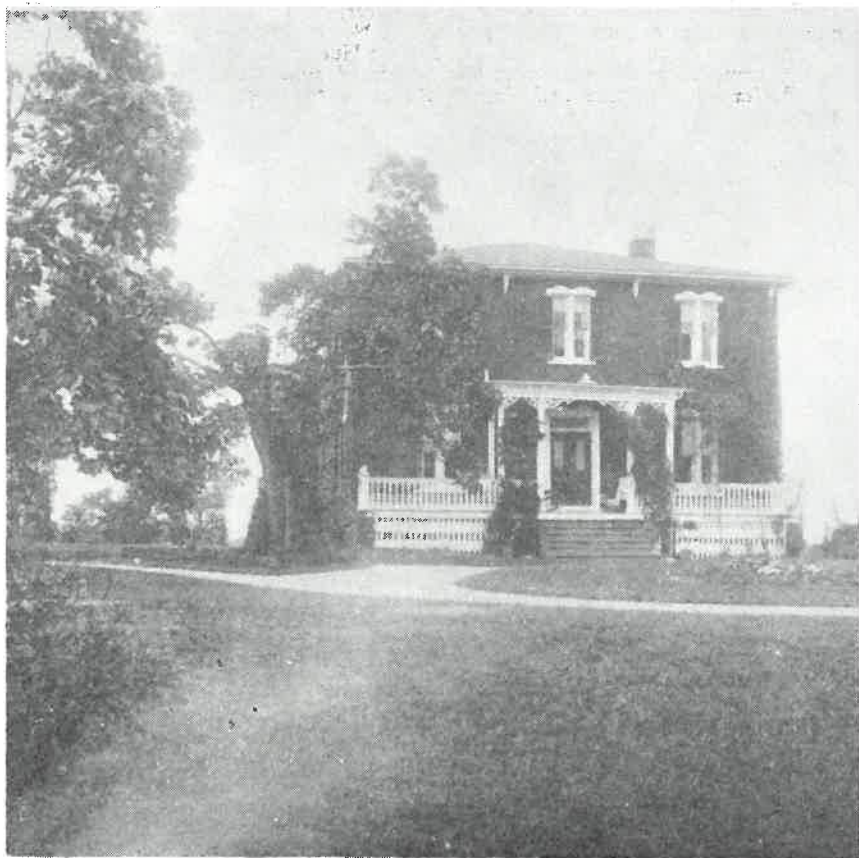
<sup>50</sup> Marriage notice in *National Intelligencer*, May 11, 1831, quoted in *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (December 1967, p. 293).

<sup>51</sup> Conversation of author with Mr. Brooke Hunter, December 19, 1955.

<sup>52</sup> Conversation of author with Miss Mattie W. Fillebrown, circa January 1956.

<sup>53</sup> *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*, Monday, November 29, 1875, p. 3, col. 2.

## SPRING BANK



—Picture Courtesy of Martin Claussen

*This view of the Spring Bank house was photographed, looking north, by the A. J. Jameson Studios in Alexandria in September 1914, when the house was owned, and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Smith Miller, Jr.*



# SPRING BANK

BY EDITH MOORE SPROUSE

Once a part of the West Grove Plantation the 128 acres which became known as Spring Bank were acquired in 1805 by Robert Patton of Alexandria. Patton bought the tract from the executors of Roger West for \$1920<sup>1</sup> in January; in September he married Ann Clifton Reeder. The ceremony took place at Clifton Lodge the residence of his kinsman James Patton.<sup>2</sup>

The merchant's bride, described as "the amiable Miss Reeder," was a descendant of the Brent family. They were among the earliest patentees of land along the Potomac River between the present city of Alexandria and Mount Vernon. The Patton's first child, Eleanor, was born in 1807<sup>3</sup> and by 1809 the family seem to have resided at Spring Bank. That year he placed two advertisements in the *Alexandria Daily Advertiser* (now the *Gazette*) referring to it as such. One time his servant Tolley, a "rather chunky made" man with "several of his fore teeth out," ran away. Later some one cut down his new post and rail fence, and Patton offered a reward if the culprit was produced.<sup>4</sup>

He announced on February 15, 1811 that he was selling 24 merino sheep which had been imported from Cadiz, Spain. Some of the sheep were kept at Spring Bank, for on August 7, 1813 Patton had wool for sale there as well as ten merino rams "at the seat of Robert Patton, Jr., two miles from Alexandria on the Mount Vernon Road." The plantation was being managed at this time by Thomas Lawson, since Patton himself was preparing for a trip to Europe.

Before he left he drew up a will, giving a life interest in his estate to his wife and recommending that she continue to live at Spring Bank and improve it for the benefit of their two sons. The youngest, only a month old and not yet christened, was left that part (100 acres) purchased from William Hepburn and twenty shares of Great Hunting Creek Bridge stock. Robert, the older son, would later receive "the mansion house of Spring Bank" and the lands purchased from West's executor, William Herbert. These totalled 253 acres. The will mentioned his daughters Eleanor Ann and Mary Seymour. Mrs. Patton may have been in poor health, for her sister Cecilia Reeder had been living with them and managing the household. To her was left \$100 and a further \$60 for a "mourning ring," with instructions that she was to have the care of the children in the event of his wife's death. To his own mother, Helen Patton, now living near Kilmarnock, Scotland, he left £50 annually.

The witnesses to this will were all men of New Bedford, Mass. It is probable that Robert wrote this document just before he sailed.<sup>5</sup> Despite his fears, the voyage was accomplished safely and by 1815 he was back at Spring Bank looking for another manager.

His wife Ann also survived, for in 1820 she relinquished her dower rights to lands belonging to her husband in New York. In return, certain

of his possessions were put in trust for her benefit. Among them were seven slaves, a four-wheeled carriage called a coachee, two sofas, twelve mahogany chairs with cane bottoms and two high posted bedsteads.<sup>6</sup> Eleanor, their oldest child, was married at St. Patrick's Church in Washington in 1822. Her husband was George Mason of Gunston, a grandson of the author of the Bill of Rights.

Robert Patton died at Spring Bank in September, 1826. Two years later his household effects were sold, after the death of his wife.

#### SPLENDID FURNITURE For Sale:

Will be sold at Spring Bank, the late residence of Mrs. Robert Patton, deceased, on Oct. 4th some very superb furniture, consisting of mahogany dining and tea tables, mahogany cane-bottom sofa and chairs, shovels, tongs, fenders, oil cloth and Wilton carpets, paintings of the Cataracts of Niagara and the Falls of the Potomac, painted for General Washington, and purchased at his sale, naval prints, engravings, etc., large mirrors, cut glass, also common house and kitchen furniture, feather beds, mattresses, tables, chairs . . .<sup>7</sup>

Patton's heirs rented the house for five years to John Armfield of Alexandria, who promised in 1833 "to make good and substantial improvements on the dwelling" during his tenacy.<sup>8</sup> Armfield, in 1824 a stage-coach driver in Virginia, had met Isaac Franklin of Tennessee and gone into partnership with him in what was to become the most extensive slave-trading firm in the United States during the 1830's. In May, 1828 the firm leased a three-story brick house on Duke Street in Alexandria and announced that they wished to buy "150 likely slaves."<sup>9</sup>

Thomas F. Mason, later to become the mayor of Alexandria, defended the practice of private slave establishments. Claiming that "the public jails had not been used for some years past in carrying on the domestic slave trade," he wrote in 1829:

The dealers have found that they keep their slaves at less expense in the establishments which they have themselves erected. In these private prisons we think entitled to credit, and believe, that the slaves are treated with humanity, and that they are uncommonly well clothed and fed . . . those engaged in the trade appear to have found it their interest, as it has certainly been their policy, to exercise toward their slaves rather a sort of seductive indolence than anything like cruelty or violence.<sup>10</sup>

Franklin & Armfield transported nearly 1200 slaves annually to markets in New Orleans. Their packets, the brigs Uncas and Tribune, left Alexandria on a regular schedule. In 1834 Armfield was said to have been worth half a million dollars and Franklin's wealth surpassed his.<sup>11</sup>

John Armfield married his partner's niece, Martha Franklin, in November, 1834. They were married at Orange Court House, Virginia but there had been another wedding in July which took place at Spring Bank, when Henry Franklin was married "at the summer residence of John Armfield, near Alexandria." Isaac Franklin, who may have come up from Tennessee for that wedding, had a trunk full of clothes stolen shortly afterwards.<sup>12</sup>

By May, 1838 the partners had sold their establishment in Alexandria to George Kephart. Franklin retired, built Fairvue in Tennessee, and had several plantations in Louisiana.<sup>13</sup> John Armfield's later activities are not known.

In 1843 and 1844 the heirs of Spring Bank's first owner had sold their interest to a cousin, George Mason, who also owned Hollin Hall. A grandson of the Virginia patriot, Mason had been born in 1797 in Maryland. He married first in 1821 and his wife died a year later. Subsequently he married his cousin Virginia Mason and, after her death, his cousin Sarah Mason of Gunston Hall. By his third wife he had two children after their marriage in 1846.<sup>14</sup>

Not long afterwards Mason, desiring to move south, advertised Spring Bank "where he now lives." Of the 150 acres, 40 were wooded. The plantation had:

One of the best and most extensive mansions in this part of Virginia, containing with its wings and basements twenty-five rooms under one roof; many of them large and elegantly finished.

There were stables, a three story brick barn, and other outhouses

No place can be more healthy, as the subscriber's constant residence there, with his family, for several years past has proved—during which time, a Physician has never been called in for any disease that could be ascribed to either place or season.<sup>15</sup>

Unsuccessful in his attempt to sell this and his other plantations (Hollin Hall and Lexington), George Mason remained at Spring Bank for the rest of his life. A county magistrate, he took an active part in politics and was said to have written a bill which would expel all Northerners from the state of Virginia.

From the viewpoint of a Northerner, Mason personified the enemy:

A more bitter or non-compromising rebel never lived than this man Mason upon whose farm we were encamped. He hated the name of the North and everything connected with it. A more haughty, overbearing autocrat never existed, and it was gall and wormwood to him to see the boys in blue on his place, and the hated Stars and Stripes flaunted in his very face . . . It was said his great delight was to have poor whites arrested for petty larceny, trading with his negroes, or other trivial charges. He would have them tied to a post in his yard and would sit on his porch and rub his hands with glee to see them writhe under the lash . . .<sup>16</sup>

Yet in friendly eyes George Mason was thought of as:

A man of fine abilities and elegant attainments, whose well chosen English and classical library was enriched with his own annotations; who as a young man had known something of the literary circles of New York in the days of Halleck and Drake, who had lived for some time a life of studious seclusion at his country home . . .<sup>17</sup>

Troubled by the exposed condition of the neighborhood below Alexandria, Mason had written on May 5, 1861 to General Lee asking for military protection.<sup>18</sup> He felt the lack of such support acutely when Col. Ellsworth's troops occupied Alexandria on the 24th. According to the Northern chronicler,

Terrible consternation seized him at once, and hasty preparations were made for immediate flight. He gathered up his large band of slaves, packed up his plate and other valuables, loaded his wagons, put his family into carriages, and in the wildest haste, made a start for Richmond. But he had a bitter dose yet to swallow. Just as his family carriage, followed by his slaves, reached the great gate leading to the Pohick Road, a squad of Union Cavalry dashed up and halted this procession. The family was terribly frightened, and it is said that Mason's profanity was sublime and picturesque. He cursed the Union and its defenders, called them mud sills, Lincoln hirelings, Yankee scum, and other pet names, declaring that such an outrage on a Virginia gentleman would cause rivers of blood to flow. But the soldiers were firm and marched him and his family back to the house where, for many weary months, he was compelled to remain a prisoner, never being permitted to leave the premises. This meant a holiday for his slaves, many of whom ran off, all delighted at the state of affairs and greatly enjoyed the discomfiture of "ole mastah."<sup>19</sup>

The 63rd Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, were quartered at Spring Bank from October 14, 1861 to March 17, 1862. Officially this became Camp Johnston, although the soldiers called it Camp Pennyroyal. The regiment, under Col. Alexander Hays, were engaged in constructing Fort Lyon on North Kings Highway. A night school, debating society, and other amusements were organized. The chaplain gave weekly lectures on Palestine and the camp was regarded as "a very pleasant place":

The boys of Company A 'threw together' and purchased a couple of good violins at Alexandria, and . . . nearly every night there were stag dances held in the company streets.

For winter quarters log houses were built about 8' high, with A tents set on top, and a stick and mud chimney at one end.

George Mason, perhaps seeking to better his reduced fortunes, allegedly applied to the Colonel to sell pies to the occupying soldiers. At a meeting

of the Union Association in December one Northern sympathizer said that he "did not exult in the misfortunes of any man, but he must confess it gave him consolation when he saw that the misfortunes which fell on Union men were shared by those who were instrumental in bringing this state of things on the country."<sup>20</sup>

After the troops departed Mason put in a claim for damages for \$20,000. Fences and gates were down, ditches filled, "timber and woods cut down, fields utterly desolated during a long and very wet winter." The fruit and ornamental trees were gone and "everything on the place not entirely ruined [was] most essentially and permanently injured."<sup>21</sup>

Mason made his will in 1867, three years before his death. He directed that no mourning be worn and requested:

when I depart this life that my body shall be enclosed only in a winding sheet, after the good old practice of our ancestors, and be placed in a coffin made of pine plank cut from my own estate in Mason's Neck, made perfectly plain and without any ornament and that it should be interred without any form of ceremony in the family burying ground at Gunston.

He hoped that there would never be a "Bearing about the mockeries of woe" at his funeral. The Lexington tract on Mason Neck, believed by him to be the only part of the family lands still in the hands of descendants, was left to his son George. His wife Sally and daughter Kora were each left a third of his estate.<sup>22</sup>

George Mason died on March 25, 1870. His obituary in the *Alexandria Gazette* that day said that he had been paralyzed for some time from a stroke, and called him "a high toned Virginia Gentleman of the old school."

In 1878 his dwelling house burned. Mason's son George was awakened by his mother about 10 o'clock at night when the roof and porch were aflame:

Mr. Mason after getting out returned to save some papers and valuables and was cut off by the fire. He, however placed a wet towel over his face and rushed through the flames, sustaining very severe burns on his hands, face and arms.

Lost in the fire were the library of George Mason of Gunston, his portrait and that of his wife Ann Eilbeck and of her parents, and much of the family heirlooms. Mason managed to save the table on which his great-grandfather had written the Virginia Bill of Rights, as well as his grandfather William Mason's sword. This weapon, now in the Virginia Historical Society, was one of six presented to George Washington by the King of Spain for distribution to those who had fought bravely in the American Revolution.<sup>23</sup>

The extent of damage caused by the fire is unknown, but the outline of the burned porch could be seen on the front of the building when it was demolished nearly a century later. Young George Mason recovered

slowly from his burns. In delicate health, he had studied medicine at the University of Virginia and also took up law. Because of his physical condition he was forced to relinquish both of these professions. After a period of Business in Alexandria, he was advised by his doctors to lead a less sedentary life and accepted an appointment as a postoffice inspector on the Pacific coast. He died there in 1888 of "typhoid pneumonia" and was buried in Ivy Hill Cemetery, Alexandria.<sup>24</sup> His mother died a few weeks later.

Repairs must have been made at Spring Bank by May of 1884, for by that time General Fitzhugh Lee was renting the house during his campaign for Governor of Virginia.<sup>25</sup> An 1856 graduate of West Point, Lee fought Indians on the Western plains, was an instructor at the U.S. Military Academy before the Civil War, and joined the Confederacy to become Chief of Cavalry in the Army of Northern Virginia. After the war Lee returned to his Richland Farm in Stafford County and on April 18, 1871 he married Miss Nellie Fowle of Alexandria. A glimpse appears of Mrs. Lee in an account of a New Years Ball a few years later, when she was described as "the beautiful and accomplished wife of General Fitz Lee" and was "elegantly attired in orange silk flounced with black lace."<sup>26</sup>

General Lee became Governor in 1885 and later served as Consul General in Cuba. He had made the Centennial Speech at Bunker Hill in 1875 and lived long enough to take an active part in planning the Jamestown Exposition for 1907. When he died in April, 1905 the eulogy said:

To the general public throughout the whole country, he became a popular hero—to his friends and to the men who had followed him through the dust and sweat of battle, he was always simply 'dear old Fitz.'<sup>27</sup>

In April 1885 the Mason family sold the property to Mr. and Mrs. Johnson Downey, of Frederick County, Maryland, for \$8250. Improvements in the form of a silo, corn, and a carriage house were constructed by F. A. Reed before Mr. Downey died in 1890. Fifty acres were west of the Mount Vernon Road (now U.S. 1) and 130 acres were on the east. Downey had forty head of cattle, five horses and three carts and wagons. Although the property was put up for sale in 1895 it was repurchased by Downey's widow, Rose; at that time the dwelling and its contents were insured for \$4100.<sup>28</sup> On October 11, 1911 Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Smith Miller, Jr., purchased the house from Mrs. Downey. Gerrit Miller, (1869-1956) was a Zoologist at the Department of Agriculture and the Smithsonian Institution early in the 20th century, a descendent of the New England abolitionist Gerrit Smith and a nephew of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. His wife was Anna Gates Miller. During their occupancy a set of photographs was made of the interior and exterior of the house.<sup>29</sup>

During the last years of the nineteenth century proposals were made to build a new road from the city of Washington to Mount Vernon. The logical route below Alexandria, in the mind of one local resident, was that

which George Washington himself had taken. In 1891 George Washington Ball drew a map showing this old road, long since obliterated except for one short stretch just north of Spring Bank. The route turned off from the present U.S. 1 at what is now Quander Road, following its alignment up the hill into the present Bucknell Manor subdivision. To the south of its intersection with the present Beacon Hill Road, the early road, "a ragged lane, washed into gullies and nearly overgrown with pine . . . with the remains of a Cedar wall enclosing it at either side" had by 1891 been long ploughed under. Mr. Ball remembered seeing it fifty years before, running between Clifton (in 1972 the Popkins farm adjacent to Groveton High School) and Mount Hybla (the present Hollin Hills subdivision) then passing through Gum Springs. His recollection was confirmed by T. L. Chase, who had lived at Spring Bank after marrying George Mason's daughter Kora. According to Chase, "though the Entrance to that place has been changed to the 'Gravel Road,' the old gate posts on the 'Washington Road' are still standing."<sup>30</sup>

The boulevard to Mount Vernon was not built until 1932 and Mr. Ball's route had by then been forgotten, but it is still possible at the present time to drive along the Quander Road segment.

In more recent times the house at Spring Bank was owned by the Sweeley family and sold in 1941 to Robert Bowman. During the second World War the building was converted into apartments and a trailer park was established on the grounds. In 1963 Bowman's widow sold the twenty-acre tract to Lee Plaza, Inc. Plans were announced for a six-story office building, shopping center, theater and four apartment buildings but the project was not built. In 1970 the trailers were removed and the vacated houses used for storage. S. S. Kresge purchased the property the following year as a site for a K-Mart department store.<sup>31</sup>

On January 27, 1972, learning that the house was to be demolished, the Fairfax County History Commission quickly contacted John Chretien, representative of the Kresge Company. Learning of Spring Bank's historic background, Mr. Chretien obligingly postponed the demolition so that photographs could be taken and certain significant items removed. On February 2nd an emergency team succeeded in removing a landscape (painted in 1935 by Edwin S. Sweeley) which showed Spring Bank in earlier days. Because the canvas had been glued to the plaster above the fireplace, this proved to be a difficult project. While William Barrett made photographs of the painting, Tony Wrenn, David Giffen, Edith Sprouse and Pat Williams collected stepladders, hammers and chisels. Following one suggestion, a wallpaper steamer and portable generator were rented in the hope that the painting could be steamed away from the wall.

The glue remaining unaffected by this process, another method was tried. Throughout the cold, wet winter afternoon attempts were made to chisel into the thin layer of plaster between the canvas and the brick fireplace wall. A lamp was brought in and connected to the generator. Just as a

new supply of gasoline arrived for fuel, the generator failed and could not be re-started. Working by the beams of one faint flashlight and car headlights shining through the broken windows, the rescue team succeeded by 9:00 p.m. in freeing the painting from the wall.

On the following day, with rain still coming down, representatives of the History Commission, the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Department of Public Affairs met with Mr. Chretien and developer Gelinas to discuss the salvage of mantels, a stone watering trough from the dairy house, and the front steps. The latter were stone. Former residents stated they had been brought from the Capitol after it was burned by the British in the War of 1812. Although this tradition was unauthenticated, it was felt that the steps seemed older than the house and should be kept.

The next morning the six stone steps were removed by the Park Authority, first having been sketched and numbered, and taken to Sully Plantation for storage. Seven mantels and a large picture frame, which had hung above the parlor fireplace, were also retrieved for future use. It is thought that the steps may be incorporated into a landscape plan at one of the county parks.

It was regretted that none of the holly trees, nor the old fig and lilacs which grew at the corner of the house, could be moved. A few of the daffodills from the terraces were dug up. Over the weekend, after most of the trees had been uprooted by the bulldozer, the grounds were checked with metal detectors. An 1828 penny and several Civil War bullets were found on the hillside across the stream by George Haas.

On Monday morning, February 7, 1972 a bulldozer turned the house at Spring Bank into a pile of rubble. Thanks to the alertness of an unknown citizen who informed the National Trust for Historic Preservation of its impending demise, and to the cooperation of S. S. Kresge & Co., it did not vanish without being recorded.

As chunks of plaster are being painstakingly removed from the painting, it is fitting to close the story of Spring Bank with the inscription written by the artist:

SPRING BANK  
MANOR  
VA.

BUILT ABOUT 1740 BY GEO. MASON, ESQ.  
HERE LET TIMES PALSIED HAND  
REST LIGHTLY . . . AND GREEN THE  
MEMORY KEEP . . . OF THOSE WHOSE  
HANDS AND HEARTS KEPT THIS PLACE

EDWIN STANLEY SWEeley

1935

If the lines are more imaginative than factual, the sentiment is enduring.  
—Edith Moore Sprouse



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Fairfax County Deed Book E-2, p. 477.
- <sup>2</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, September 3, 1805. Clifton Lodge, destroyed during the Civil War, was located off Popkins Farm Road in Groveton.
- <sup>3</sup> Chester H. Brent, *The Descendants of Col. Giles Brent, Capt. George Brent and Robert Brent* (Rutland, Vermont, 1946), p. 123.
- <sup>4</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, September 18, 1809 and May 26, 1809.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 27, 1813; April 19, 1814; Dec. 29, 1815.
- <sup>6</sup> Fairfax County Will Book 0-1, p. 360. A plat of the West Grove tract made in 1811 shows Patton's land adjacent, in Fairfax County Deed Book L-2, p. 380.
- <sup>7</sup> Fairfax County Deed Book S-2, p. 246.
- <sup>8</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, January 18, 1822 (Eleanor Patton's marriage); September 18, 1826 (Robert Patton's death); September 30, 1828 (sale of furniture).
- <sup>9</sup> Fairfax County Deed Book A-3, p. 506.
- <sup>10</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, July 1, 1828.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, February 24, 1829.
- <sup>12</sup> Wendell H. Stephenson, *Isaac Franklin, Slave Trader and Planter of the Old South* (Louisiana State University Press, 1938), p. 11, 34, 93.
- <sup>13</sup> Frederick Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1931), p. 60.
- <sup>14</sup> *Antiques Magazine*, October, 1971.
- <sup>15</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, August 2, Sept. 5, Nov. 20, 1834; May 26, 1838.
- <sup>16</sup> Stephenson, *Franklin*.
- <sup>17</sup> R. E. Ingersoll, *Some Descendants of George Mason of Gunston*. Mss. DAR Library.
- <sup>18</sup> Christ Church, Alexandria, Va. Marriage Register.
- <sup>19</sup> Fairfax County Deed Book H-3, pp. 288, 391, 394.
- <sup>20</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, August 19, 1848.
- <sup>21</sup> Gilbert A. Hays, *Under the Red Patch . . .* (Pittsburgh, Penna., 1908) p. 37.
- <sup>22</sup> Kate Mason Rowland, "Curious Wills in the Mason Family" *Richmond Critic*. Undated clippings in New York Public Library.
- <sup>23</sup> I. S. Congress. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records Of the Union and Confederate Armies*. (Washington, D.C., 1880-1910). First Series, vol. I, p. 21.
- <sup>24</sup> Hays, *Red Patch*, p. 38-40.
- <sup>25</sup> *Local News* (Alexandria, Va.), Dec. 19, 1861.
- <sup>26</sup> Fairfax County Deed Book I-4, p. 112. Estimate filed in 1868.
- <sup>27</sup> Fairfax County Will Book A-2, p. 534.
- <sup>28</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, November 13, 23, 29, 1878.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, April 30, May 8, 1888. Christ Church Records, May 8, 15, 1888.
- <sup>30</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, May 24, 1884. Lee's letter headed Spring Bank.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, April 19, 1871; January 5, 1875.
- <sup>32</sup> *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. XIII. (1905), p. xix.
- <sup>33</sup> Fairfax County Deed Book E-5, p. 246; I-6, p. 630.
- <sup>34</sup> Fairfax County Chancery Suits, File 25, Downey v. Downey.
- <sup>35</sup> Photographs owned by Martin Claussen, Alexandria, Va.
- <sup>36</sup> Map of the Vicinity of Mt. Vernon in Ye Olden Time. G. W. Ball, 1891. Map Division, Library of Congress.
- <sup>37</sup> *Evening Star*, September 24, 1964.

# MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE FAIRFAX HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Formed at Vienna, Va., February 22, 1910)

The Fairfax Historical Society was organized at Vienna, Va., Feb. 22, 1910, by the adoption of a constitution and the election of the following officers:

President, Mr. C. D. Choate, of Herndon, Va.

Vice-Presidents (of whom there are to be six) Captain S. R. Donohoe of Fairfax; Rev. Franklin Noble of Falls Church and Russell A. Lynn of Herndon for Dranesville district.

Secretary-treasurer: Mrs. Mary Stephens Rippey of Vienna.

Executive Committee: Mrs. John W. Echols, Vienna, Judge J. M. Love, Fairfax and Rev. E. L. Goodwin, Fairfax, together with the officers of the society.

The society's objects, as set forth in the constitution, are "the study and preservation of the history and annals of Fairfax County and its people." Any member of Fairfax County may become a member by filing an application with the secretary or any member of the executive committee and paying an initiation fee of fifty cents to cover the first year's dues. The annual meeting will be held on Washington's birthday at such place as the executive committee may designate.

Twenty-eight persons responded to Mr. Choate's invitation to attend the Vienna meeting, Mr. Choate presiding. After an informal discussion a committee composed of R. Walton Moore, Russell A. Lynn, S. C. Stuntz, Rev. E. L. Goodwin and Mrs. J. W. Echols, was appointed to draft a constitution. This document was very brief. The principal decision reached in its formation was that the membership and scope of the society should, for the present, be confined to Fairfax County though ultimately it is possible that they will be extended to take in Loudoun and Alexandria Counties, both within the boundaries of old Fairfax. In addition to those mentioned above there were present H. A. Sagar and Arthur Robb, of Herndon, F. W. Richardson and Robert Wiley of Fairfax, J. W. Head, of Barcroft, Major Echols and a number of Vienna people. Luncheon was served by the ladies of Fairfax County Chapter, D.A.R., after which a trip was made to the Court House at Fairfax to view the restored Washington will and revolutionary records.

MARY STEPHENS RIPPEY, *Secretary*

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The first executive meeting of the Fairfax Historical Society was held at the public library of Vienna, on the afternoon of Tuesday, March 29,

Mr. C. D. Choate presiding. Other members of the committee present: Judge J. M. Love, Rev. E. L. Goodwin, Mrs. C. M. Rippey. It was agreed that in the event of objectionable applicants desiring to obtain membership in the society the application should be laid before the executive meeting of the society. It was also agreed that each member of the executive committee should send a list of persons likely to desire membership. Authority was given Mr. Choate to go ahead with certain lines of work he had mapped out for the advancement of the society. Mr. Goodwin suggested that a list of books should be filed with the secretary, showing where the genealogy of Fairfax County can be found. It was also agreed that committees should be appointed to have charge of research work in the matter of genealogy, historic churches, houses and locations. It was also agreed that until a librarian was appointed, any papers or books belonging to the society should be filed with the secretary.

Mr. Choate is also authorized to call meetings of the society whenever necessary.

Among the names suggested for vice-presidents of the three remaining districts were Mr. Hall and Mr. Lee of Lee district, Mr. Dodge of Mt. Vernon and Captain Ballard of Centreville. It was also suggested that Paul Kester of Gunston Hall, Va., had in his possession valuable papers which would prove useful to the society.

Addendum to former notes: R. Walton Moore was chairman of the committee to nominate officers.

MARY STEPHENS RIPPEY, *Secretary*

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At the second executive meeting of the Fairfax Historical Society held at the public library, Vienna, Va., April 11, 1910, C. D. Choate presided. Judge J. M. Love, Rev. E. L. Goodwin and Mrs. C. M. Rippey were present. The following committees were appointed:

Committee on publications:

C. D. Choate, Mrs. C. M. Rippey and Mrs. J. W. Echols.

Committee on towns:

Mrs. Caroline Sherman, Mrs. E. S. Bethel, Dr. A. G. Coumbe.

Committee on Churches:

Rev. E. L. Goodwin, Rev. F. Noble, Mr. James Westcott.

Committee on genealogy:

C. D. Choate, H. E. Hanes, and H. A. Sagar.

Committee on business houses:

M. E. Church, E. L. Robey, Robert Wiley.

Committee on farming interests:

Capt. Franklin Sherman, Franklin Williams, Miss Mary Lukens.

Committee on roads and roalroads:

R. Walton Moore, F. W. Richardson, Vernon Ford.

Committee on Courts and Court Records:

Judge J. M. Love, Rev. E. L. Goodwin, F. W. Richardson.

Committee on Fairfax legal professions:

R. W. Moore, R. E. Thornton.

Committee on civil war and war veterans:

Thomas R. Keith, Capt. Sherman, Robert Wiley.

Committee on Medical professions:

Dr. A. G. Coumbe.

The president, C. D. Choate and the secretary, Mrs. C. M. Rippey, were also appointed a committee to write up the life, so far as ascertainable, of any member who might die before the next annual election.

The program for the meeting at Fairfax on labor day was discussed and also tentative plans for a basket picnic and historical pilgrimage to Old Pohick [Church] some time in the early fall.

MARY STEPHENS RIPPEY, *Secretary*

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The third executive meeting of the Fairfax Historical Society was held at the home of Mrs. J. W. Echols, Vienna, on Dec. 31, 1910, Mr. Choate, presiding. Mrs. Echols read an interesting paper written by Mr. Choate, who has also compiled a fine historical map of Fairfax County. Mr. R. Walton Moore was appointed on the executive committee in the place of Rev. E. L. Goodwin, who has removed from this locality. Plans for the annual meeting of the Historical Society at Fairfax were discussed and the program talked over. Mrs. Echols and Mrs. Rippey were appointed by Mr. Choate to attend to the refreshment end of it.

MARY STEPHENS RIPPEY, *Secretary*

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The first annual meeting of the Fairfax Historical Society was held in the Court House at Fairfax, July 4, 1911. In spite of the excessive heat nearly fifty members and their friends assembled to listen to the interesting program prepared, the president, C. D. Choate, in the chair. Judge J. M. Love made the address of welcome. Mr. John W. Rust followed with a paper relating to law points of Fairfax County and Mrs. J. W. Echols read an excellent paper on Colonial houses. Mr. R. Walton Moore made a brief, though interesting talk, reciting the important part Fairfax County had always taken in the affairs of the nation, even further back than Revolutionary times, and enumerating some of the sons of old Fairfax whose names would never die. After a few remarks appropriate to the day by Mr. Walter T. Oliver, the assemblage was invited to luncheon at the Hotel Fairfax, where excellent provision had been made for them.

The afternoon session opened at 1 o'clock and the business of the day—the election of officers—was taken up. Mr. Choate was unanimously reelected president, Mrs. Mary Stephens Rippey was re-elected secretary-treasurer and the executive committee, composed of Judge J. M. Love, Mr. R. Walton Moore and Mrs. J. W. Echols, was re-elected. It was proposed to invite Mr. Frank Page to accept the place on the executive committee made vacant by the removal to another place of Rev. E. L. Goodwin.

At the conclusion of the business meeting Mr. Choate invited Mrs. George E. King, regent of Fairfax County, D.A.R., to address the society, which she did, thanking the society in behalf of the chapter for the day's

enjoyment and expressing the hope that the chapter, which was organized six years ago, and the society might co-operate in their work which was along the same lines. Mrs. King also offered to have read at some future meeting an historical paper prepared by Mr. B. W. Summy which required considerable research and is full of local interest.

The meeting then adjourned.

MARY STEPHENS RIPPEY, *Secretary*

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The fourth executive meeting of the Fairfax Historical Society was held Saturday, August 19, 1911, at the home of Mrs. J. W. Echols, Vienna, Mr. C. D. Choate, president, in the chair. Mrs. Echols and Mrs. Rippey were the only other members of the executive committee present. Mr. Choate gave the treasurer, Mrs. Rippey, \$10.00 received from Mr. J. J. Darlington, of Herndon and Washington. The secretary was directed to advise Mr. Darlington that the question of life membership was under consideration.

A publication committee consisting of Mr. Choate, Mrs. Echols and Mrs. Rippey was appointed and it was decided to organize a quarterly with Mrs. Echols as editor. The names of Mrs. Berry and Mrs. Bethel were suggested to assist the editor. The following vice-presidents were appointed by the executive committee: Rev. R. C. Drisko, Dranesville; Judge J. M. Love, Providence; M. E. Church, Falls Church; Robert E. Lee, of Lee District; Rev. Everard Meade, Mount Vernon district. Mr. Choate announced that Col. Lee would deliver an address at the next annual meeting and papers are to be read by Mr. M. D. Hall and Mr. Alden.

MARY STEPHENS RIPPEY, *Secretary*

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Some of those present at the first annual meeting of the society at Fairfax on July 4, 1911, were Rev. and Mrs. R. C. Drisko, Mr. Russell A. Lynn, of Herndon, C. D. Choate, Mr. Bushrod W. Lynn of Alexandria, Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Williams, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Rippey, Mrs. B. W. Summy, Mrs. George E. King, Mrs. J. W. Echols, Mr. James Wetscott, of Vienna, Rev. Everard Meade of Accotink, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Elliott of Albany, Oregon, Mr. and Mrs. M. D. Hall of Burke, Mr. W. W. Long, the Misses Moore, Miss Mary Donohoe, Mrs. R. E. Thornton, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Richardson, Mr. Robert Wiley, Miss Anne Hooe, Mr. John W. Rust and Mr. Thomas R. Keith.

The second annual meeting of the Fairfax Historical Society was held on February 22, 1915, at the home of Mrs. Alma D. Hine, of Vienna, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Echols assisting Mrs. Hine in entertaining the society. The meeting was called to order by Mr. C. D. Choate, the president, and the minutes of the last annual meeting were read by the secretary, Mrs. C. M. Rippey, after which Mr. Choate gave a resume of the historical work he has done for the society during the three years the organization has been in a quiescent state. His research shows that Fairfax County was the scene of the first kidnapping in the new world when Pocahontas was stolen. He also showed the map of the County which he had compiled and

referred to the suggestion of Mrs. George King that the Historical Society and the Daughters of the American Revolution might cooperate, since their work was along the same lines. Mr. Choate expressed the hope that the two D.A.R. Chapters and the Chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy might all join forces with the Historical Society and assist with the work in hand. The question as to the continuance of the society brought out a general plea for its continuance, Messrs. Lee, Echols, Stuntz, and Rev. Frank Page giving their reasons why it should be continued. Col. Lee made a particularly strong plea for the continuance of the society because the history of Fairfax County has not been written and he thinks there is a broad field if the society will go to work. Mr. Lee suggested two public meetings each year, one on February 22 and the main celebration on July 4.

On motion of Mrs. Hine a vote was taken and it was unanimously decided to continue the society. On motion of Col. Lee it was decided to continue the society at least during the time of Mr. J. J. Darlington's life, Mr. Darlington being the only life member of the society. The election of officers then took place with the following result: Col. Robert E. Lee of Ravensworth was unanimously elected president; Mr. Stephen C. Stuntz, secretary-treasurer, and Mrs. Thomas R. Keith of Fairfax, Mr. C. D. Choate of Herndon and Mrs. Tunis C. Quick of Falls Church as members of the executive committee.

A recess was here taken during which time Mrs. Echols, assisted by several friends served delicious refreshments.

The business session was then resumed and the sum of five dollars was voted to be given to the fund now being collected to restore old Pohick Church, of which Rev. Everard Meade, deceased, a charter member of the Fairfax Historical Society, was rector.

It was also agreed that hereafter regular meetings should be held February 22 and July 4, of each year, intervening meetings to be arranged by the board of directors.

Mr. Choate directed the secretary-treasurer to give Mrs. Echols a check to cover the cost of the refreshments.

Mrs. Quick called attention to a number of misstatements as to the location of historical spots, in recent magazine articles, and suggested a committee to correct all such mistakes.

On motion of Mr. Keith, Mr. R. Walton Moore was appointed chairman of a committee to collect and edit historical data of Fairfax County with a view to publishing a complete history of the county.

The meeting thereupon adjourned.

Present at this meeting were: Mr. C. D. Choate, of Herndon, Col. Robert E. Lee, of Ravensworth, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Keith, the Misses Moore, the Misses Millan, Mrs. John S. Barbour, Mrs. Walter T. Oliver, Rev. Frank Page, Miss Tillie Page of Fairfax; Mrs. Tunis C. Quick and Mrs. DesRochers of Falls Church, Mrs. Seoane and Miss Corita Seoane of Merrifield, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Stuntz, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin S. Bethel, Mrs. James H. Cameron, Mrs. Charles M. Rippey, Mrs. A. D. Hine, and Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Echols of Vienna.

MARY STEPHENS RIPPEY, *Secretary*

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The executive committee of the Fairfax Historical Society met at the home of Mrs. T. C. Quick, at Falls Church, on March 16, 1915, at 4 o'clock. The meeting was called together by the president, Col. Robert E. Lee, the officers present being the secretary, S. C. Stuntz, and Mrs. Thomas R. Keith and Mrs. T. C. Quick. Mrs. J. W. Echols of the retiring committee as also present and gave valuable advice and assistance.

The vice-presidents for the various districts were chosen as follows: Dranesville, to be appointed by the retiring president, Mr. C. D. Choate, Miss Virginia Castleman being suggested in case he has no choice; Providence, Capt. S. R. Donohoe, of Fairfax; Centreville, Prof. Ormond Stone; Falls Church, Dr. S. A. Wallis, of Theological Seminary; Lee, Mrs. Ben Nevitt, Swetnam; and Mt. Vernon, Miss Elizabeth M. Sharp, Woodlawn, Accotink.

The committees were brought up to date, and the members assigned as follows:

Publications, past and present: Mr. C. D. Choate, Mrs. J. W. Echols, and Capt. S. R. Donohoe.

Towns: Mrs. E. S. Bethel, Mr. T. R. Keith, Mrs. J. M. DesRochers.

Churches: Dr. Frank Page, Mrs. M. E. Church, Dr. W. P. Moncure.

Genealogy: S. C. Stuntz, Mrs. J. S. Bukey, Mrs. T. C. Quick.

Business Houses: Mr. M. E. Church, Mr. E. L. Robey, and Robert Wiley.

Farming interests: Mr. Franklin Williams, Mr. R. E. Berry, and C. D. Choate.

Roads and railroads: Mr. R. Walton Moore, Mr. F. W. Richardson, and Mr. Vernon Ford.

Courts and court records: Judge J. M. Love, Mr. Shield McCandlish and Mr. J. J. Darlington.

Fairfax legal profession: Mr. John S. Barbour, Mr. R. E. Thornton, and Mr. H. E. Hanes.

Civil War and war veterans: Mr. Robert Wiley, Captain Dye of Herdon, and Capt. R. W. Ballard.

Medical profession: Dr. F. M. Brooks, Swetnam, Dr. William Caton, Newington, and Dr. A. G. Coumbe.

It was decided to hold an exhibit at the County Fair if arrangements could be made, the idea being to show portraits of county celebrities and pictures of historic places, of which Fairfax County has so many.

Inasmuch as the Fairfax Civic League is to hold a picnic at the Fair grounds on July 4th it was decided to arrange to hold the 4th of July meeting at that time and place, the program being given in the morning in the auditorium.

The secretary presented the question of distributing genealogical blanks for filling, which should be preserved in the society files for future reference. The idea was approved though no action was taken.

The idea of marking two historic spots in the county each year was suggested by the president and the idea approved. Suggestions with proof of the locations to be marked are to be welcomed from all members and

friends. The secretary volunteered to look up the prices of enamel plates for permanent markers, and to ascertain the expense of having photographs taken of the historic houses in the county.

Mrs. Keith reported that her brother, Mr. R. Walton Moore, to whom the work of compiling the county history for the society was to be left, would accept this arduous task, and the various committees were instructed to assist him in all ways possible.

Meeting adjourned sine die, to be called as the President sees fit at the home of Mrs. T. R. Keith, Fairfax.

S. C. STUNTZ, *Secretary*

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The second semi-annual meeting of the Fairfax Historical Society was held at the Fair Grounds, Fairfax, in connection with the 4th of July picnic of the Fairfax Civic and School League. The program for the morning in the auditorium was arranged by the executive committee, and consisted of the following:

In the absence of the President, Col. Robert E. Lee, Jr., the secretary, S. C. Stuntz presided.

The first paper of the day was on the Courthouses of Fairfax County, by Mrs. J. Warnock Echols, of Vienna. She traced the history of the county seat in its various peregrinations, from Alexandria to Freedom Hill, back to Alexandria, thence to its present site. In connection with the Freedom Hill site, she emphasized the desirability of marking this spot in the near future.

Rev. Frank Page, of Fairfax, then spoke briefly on the history of the Episcopal Church in Fairfax County, and gave reminiscences and recollections concerning its development.

The program was then turned over to the Civic League, and R. Walton Moore introduced the League speaker of the day, Commissioner Louis Brownlow of the District of Columbia.

S. C. STUNTZ, *Secretary*

\* \* \*

The third annual meeting of the Fairfax Historical Society was held by invitation at the home of Mrs. J. T. Unverzagt, Falls Church, refreshments being served by the Civic League of that town.

An unusually good program was given by the following members and friends of the society.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Rev. Dr. Grinnan of the Falls Church Episcopal church.

Instrumental music by Miss Thompson.

The President and secretary were unanimously reelected, and the executive committee re-elected, Mrs. Keith, Mrs. Berry, and Mrs. Quick, with the election of two additional members, Mrs. J. W. Echols, and Miss Mary Millan.

Music, vocal solo by Miss Katharine Fairfax Garner,\* with encore. (\*Mrs. Harley M. Bishop, 171 Spring St., Herndon, Va. (1975)).



Address by Dr. S. A. Wallis, of the Theological Seminary, "Some of the Homes of Lower Fairfax." This was the principal feature of the afternoon's program, and covered Mt. Vernon, Gunston Hall, Mount Eagle, and Cedar Grove of the colonial period, and Woodlawn and Ravensworth of the post-colonial period, with references to Belvoir, Springfield, Lexington, Bradley, and others.

Music, violin solo, by Mr. George Ryall Albertson, with accompaniment by \*Mrs. Albertson. (\*Mrs. Grace Carter Albertson Nicholls, 3727 20th Ave. S., St. Petersburg, Fla. 33711 (1975)).

Notes and gleanings from old Alexandria papers, by the Secretary. Brief sketches of conditions in old Alexandria and Washington, with quaint advertisements, and similar notes.

Vocal solo by Mrs. J. T. Unverzagt.

Paper, Famous Fairfax Ladies, by Mrs. Joseph Berry, of Vienna. Devoted mostly to the ladies of the Fairfax family. To be continued.

Vocal solo, Mrs. R. C. L. Moncure.

Refreshments and chairs cost \$10.75.

S. C. STUNTZ, *Secretary*

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No semi-annual meeting held on July 4th, 1916, it seeming inadvisable to meet again with the Fairfax Civic League picnic.

Executive committee met at Mrs. J. Warnock Echols January 25, 1917 to arrange for the annual meeting to be held at Fairfax Courthouse, Feb. 22. Mrs. Keith, Mrs. Berry, Mrs. Echols, and the secretary present. Program was arranged and entertainment arranged for, Mrs. Keith being delegated to act for the society in arranging musical program and making arrangements for refreshments.

February 22, 1917

The fourth annual meeting of the Fairfax Historical Society was held at the Fairfax County Courthouse, at 2:30, February 22, 1917. In the absence of the president, Col. Robert E. Lee, Jr., and of all the vice-presidents, Mr. J. Warnock Echols, of Vienna, one of the speakers of the day was requested to preside.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as read.

Mr. T. R. Keith was nominated for president by Mrs. J. W. Echols, who made a plea for rotation in office. Mrs. Keith declined for him and renominated Col. R. E. Lee. After a brief discussion, Col. Lee was re-elected. The Secretary-Treasurer and the executive committee were thereupon re-elected.

Mr. Joseph Berry presented the request of County Superintendent M.D. Hall, for the appointing of a committee to help locate the Old King's Highway from the South to the North, running from Alexandria to Colchester in Fairfax County territory. Mr. Joseph Berry, Mr. S. R. Donohoe, and Mr. M. D. Hall, were appointed by the chair, with two others from the lower part of the county, preferably ladies, yet to be appointed by the president.

Mrs. Echols made a suggestion that an organized movement be undertaken to increase membership, and suggested as a means thereto, that the period covered by the activities of the society be limited. Moved, seconded, and carried that the society for the next two years limit itself to the period from the close of the Revolution to the beginning of the Civil War.

Dr. Frank Page spoke briefly on the grave of Col. Henry Fairfax at Falls Church, and the Broadwater graves at the home of the Moores near Vienna, and suggested marking them. He also spoke of Capt. Donohoe\* as having in manuscript a history of Fairfax County. Motion made and carried that the society would view with pleasure the publication of the History of Fairfax now in progress, and Captain Donohoe promised to do what he could to complete and publish it.

Dr. Frank Page mentioned the names of two former Fairfax County boys, since governors of the State of Florida, and asked concerning the confusion between the names of Fairfax, the countyseat of Culpeper County, and Fairfax courthouse, the countyseat of Fairfax County. Mr. J. S. Barbour and Capt. Donohoe both made brief remarks in clearing up this subject.

After the business was concluded, the afternoon's program opened with an invocation by Dr. Frank Page, rector at Fairfax and Vienna.

Mrs. Joseph Berry, member of the executive committee, continued her paper on Some Fairfax Ladies, and discussed Mary Ball Washington, Martha Washington, the Mrs. George Mason, Mrs. Hugh West, etc., concluding the famous tribute to his wife embodied in the will of the Rev. Jeremiah Moore, ancestor of the Fairfax family of Moore's. It is to be hoped we shall have further papers on similar subjects from the skillful pen of Mrs. Berry.

Mrs. T. R. Keith with the assistance of her sister, Miss Kate Keith, had prepared a paper on Social Life in Northern Virginia, which was read by Mrs. J. W. Ballard, of Fairfax. The paper dealt with Prince William, Loudoun, Fairfax and Alexandria, and was charmingly written.

The conclusion of the afternoon's literary program was given by Mr. J. Warnock Echols, of Vienna, in an address, *The Man Behind the Gun*, in which he discussed the relations of the men who really made this country, the men behind the gun, as opposed to the well-advertised leaders. His discussion dealt largely with Washington and Lee, the two Fairfax leaders, and spoke of their experiences with their traducers and enemies and their need for the loyalty of their countrymen. Dewey was compared to his men who won the battle for him. Admirals Sampson and Schley and Hobson and the men who served with them. It was in general a plea for heroes worship as opposed to hero worship.

After the presentation of this paper the society and its guests adjourned to the Tavern for refreshments, beautifully served by Mrs. Parkinson.

Total present 40, expense for refreshments, \$15.

\* See Yearbook, Volume 1, Historical Society of Fairfax County, Virginia, Inc., pages 8-22.

Among those present were from Fairfax: Mr. and Mrs. John S. Barbour, Dr. and Mrs. Frank Page, Mrs. T. R. Keith, the Misses Moore, the Misses Millan, from Vienna, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Berry, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Echols, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Stuntz, Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Scott, Miss Gibson, Mrs. Rippey, the Misses Huntington; and from Washington, Mrs. T. C. Quick.

In a small, red, leather-bound book entitled "Treasurer's book, Fairfax Historical Society," the following charter members Fairfax Historical Society, are noted. New members were added. The book is in the possession of Mayo S. Stuntz, Vice President of the present Historical Society:

February 22, 1910

M(erton) E(lbridge) Church—Falls Church.  
 C(olumbus) D. Choate—Herndon  
 Mrs. C. D. Choate—Herndon  
 Dr. A(rthur) G. Coumbe—Vienna  
 John S. Barbour—Fairfax.  
 Edwin S. Bethel—Vienna.  
 Mrs. (Edwin) S. Bethel—Vienna.  
 J(ohn) W(arnock) Echols—Vienna.  
 Mrs. J(ohn) W(arnock) Echols—Vienna.  
 C. V(ernon) Ford—Fairfax.  
 Rev. E(dward) L. Goodwin—Ashland.  
 Miss Mary F. Goodwin—Ashland.  
 Milton Dulaney Hall—Burke.  
 Mrs. M. D. (Elizabeth Carver) Hall—Burke.  
 Harvey E(arlton) Hanes—Herndon.  
 Charles (Delano) Hine—Vienna.  
 Mrs. A(lma) D(elano) Hine—Vienna.  
 E. Hilton Jackson, Lawyer—Herndon.  
 Thomas Randolph Keith—Fairfax.  
 Mrs. T(homas) R. Keith—Fairfax.  
 Judge James Monroe Love—Fairfax.  
 Russell (A.) Lynn—Herndon.  
 Miss Mary Lukens—Accotink.  
 Rev. Everard Meade—Accotink.  
 R(obert) Walton Moore—Fairfax.  
 Miss Jennie Moore—Fairfax.  
 Miss Margaret Moore—Fairfax.  
 Dr. F(ranklin) Noble—Falls Church.  
 Frederick Wilmer Richardson—Fairfax.  
 Charles M(ckay) Rippey—Vienna.  
 Mrs. Charles M. Rippey (Mary Stephens)—Vienna.  
 Jas. W. Roberts—Box 243, Alexandria, Va.  
 Miss Anna M. Roberts—Box 243, Alexandria, Va.  
 Dr. Ernest L. Robey—Herndon.  
 Mrs. E. L. Robey—Fairfax.  
 J(ohn) Warwick Rust—Fairfax.  
 Harry A(lbert) Sagar—Herndon.  
 Capt. Franklin Sherman—Route 1, McLean.  
 Mrs. Franklin Sherman—Route 1, McLean.  
 S(tephen) C(onrad) Stuntz—Vienna.  
 Robert Ewell Thornton—Fairfax.  
 Robert Wiley—Fairfax.  
 James Westcott—Vienna.  
 J. C. L. Wilson Vienna.

# 1911—NEW MEMBERS

- June 9, Franklin Williams, Jr.—Rt. 3, Vienna.  
 Mrs. Franklin Williams—Rt. 3, Vienna.
- July 4, Rev. R. C. Drisko—Herndon.  
 Mrs. R. C. Drisko—Herndon.  
 Miss Mary C. Millan—RFD 1—Fairfax.  
 Miss Lillian Millan—RFD 1—Fairfax.  
 Mr. Joseph Berry—Vienna.  
 Mrs. Joseph Berry—Vienna.  
 Robert E(dward) Lee, Jr.—Burke, Va.  
 Mrs. E. H. Jackson.
- Sept. 16, J. Russell Alden—American Trust Building, Washington, D.C.
- Sept. 22, Paul Kester—Gunston Hall, Va.
- Sept. 29, W. W. Long—Fairfax, Va.  
 W(alter) T(ansil) Oliver—Fairfax, Va.
- 1915—Feb. 22, Mrs. T(unis) C(line) Quick—Falls Church, Va.  
 Mrs. John S. Barbour—Fairfax, Va.  
 Mrs. J. M. Des Rochers—Falls Church, Va.
- Mar. 12, Prof. Armond Stone—Centreville, Va., Manassas RFD.

# FERRIES AND THEIR KEEPERS IN OLD FAIRFAX COUNTY

BY NANCY ODOM

Groveton High School—May 2, 1975

[Ms. Odom's paper won 2nd prize in the Society's 1974-75 historical essay competition.]

There is not an abundance of recorded information on the ferryboats and their keepers in colonial Fairfax County, although there probably were many of them. There were at least fifteen officially licensed ferries existing between 1690 and 1770 and undoubtedly there were several "unofficial" ones as well. Most of these ferries had crossings on the Potomac from Virginia to Maryland, but there were also a few on smaller rivers and creeks. What follows is a compilation of available information on the ferries and their keepers in old Fairfax County.

The Court Records of Fairfax County show that one of the earliest, or perhaps *the* earliest ferry to be established in the county was that of George Mason, I, over the Occoquan River. As cited in Hening's Statutes at Large,<sup>1</sup> in 1684 George Mason was required to maintain an "able boat for the transporting the soldiers and horses"<sup>2</sup> across the Occoquan. Although the records of Stafford Court reveal that in 1691 the rights to the ferry belonged to David Strahan,<sup>3</sup> by 1744 the Masons' were again its owners. This fact is clearly evident by the Fairfax records of 1749, '50, '52, and '53, which state that Mason was paid 1,600 pounds of tobacco by the county each of these years to maintain the ferry.<sup>4</sup> In 1773 George Mason, IV willed the ferry to his son, Thomas, who sometime after 1795 replaced it by a toll bridge. This bridge was finally destroyed by a flood in August, 1807 and neither it, nor the ferry crossing, was restored. Today the crossing is made by highway, replacing the old R. F. & P. railroad bridge which came into existence about 100 years after the last ferry crossing over the Occoquan.

The next ferry to appear in the Fairfax area was owned by Francis Awbrey (1690(?)-1741). He was a very active man—engaged in contemporary land speculation in what is today Loudoun County, in 1731 was included in the first commission of the peace in the organization of Prince William, in 1732 was made inspector of Pohick warehouse and a member of the Truro vestry, and in 1739 was appointed sheriff of Prince William.<sup>6</sup> His family consisted of his wife, seven sons, and two daughters. For some reason his ferry did not start out being called "Awbrey's Ferry" (as it was later), but it was called "Magee's Ferry." It was situated on the Potomac River a few miles below Great Falls. The location of Magee's

Ferry is marked on the Fry and Jefferson map of 1755. The ferry may have been established as early as 1720, but was not a public facility until 1738. Ten years later, after Francis Awbrey's death, the ferry was moved to Analostan Island (or Roosevelt Island) where it was owned by George Mason, IV, subsequently changing its name to "Mason's Ferry." The ferry was kept in operation until 1843, when the Aqueduct Bridge replaced it.<sup>6</sup>

Sometime after 1725, Francis Awbrey received a land grant above Clerk's run where he established another ferry, the "Point of Rocks Ferry." The crossing from the Virginia shore to the Point of Rocks on the Maryland shore was a well-travelled one already when Awbrey arrived, but after 1741 when the ferry was willed to Awbrey's son, Thomas, it was not used much. The ferry was licensed to Thomas Awbrey in 1769, and six years later when a proposal arose to improve the ferry road, it was rejected because Awbrey maintained such a poor ferryboat. After the death of Thomas Awbrey in 1787 there is no record of the ferry having been continued. It was not until 1834 when Thomas Awbrey's property was owned by Rebecca Johnson that the ferry was put back in operation, this time from Loudoun County to Maryland. (Loudoun was separated from Fairfax in 1757). The ferry changed ownership again in 1837 to Margaret Graham, before it was replaced by a bridge built by the Potomac Bridge Company in 1847.

The Fry and Jefferson map of 1755 shows the location of the Goose Creek Ferry which began its crossings in 1749 under the management of Thomas Evans and continued its operation throughout 1757 by five different keepers. The Fairfax County Court Order Books state that in 1749 the banks were "to be dug down to enable tobacco carts and wagons to reach shore."<sup>7</sup> In 1752 the ferry changed ownership for the first time to Edmund Sands.<sup>8</sup> Obviously the court considered some ferries a necessary public facility and therefore paid the keepers of these ferries, as the records say that Mr. Sands was paid 2,000 pounds of tobacco by the county to keep his ferry. He also established an ordinary at his house. The ferry was kept by Henry Awbrey, son of Francis Awbrey, in 1755.<sup>9</sup> Awbrey was granted a license for an ordinary and also paid 2,000 pounds of tobacco by the county. The next year the ferry was run by John Moss who was paid 1,200 pounds of tobacco.<sup>10</sup> The last recorded owner in the Fairfax County Court Order Books of the Goose Creek Ferry was John Jenkins (1757) who was paid with 1,200 pounds of tobacco to keep the ferry.<sup>11</sup> There must have been some unpleasant attribute to that ferry to have caused it to change hands so many times!

In reference to a ferry run by William Clifton, the Fairfax County Records of 1759 say "No sign along road to here."<sup>12</sup> The information recorded on Clifton's Ferry (later called Johnson's Ferry), says that it was established at William Clifton's plantation in 1745 where there was provided "good entertainment for man and horse."<sup>13</sup> It crossed the Potomac at what George Washington called in his diary the "Johnson Spring," where the present Collingwood is located, to Thomas Wallis' land in Maryland.<sup>14</sup> The ferry was kept by Samuel Johnston in 1762

where in the same year he was licensed for an ordinary there. The ferry was probably run until 1808.<sup>16</sup>

In 1751 Hugh West was granted a license to keep an ordinary at his wife's (Sybil West) ferry called "West's Ferry" or the "Hunting Creek Ferry."<sup>16</sup> This ferry did not cross Hunting Creek as its name suggests, but crossed the Potomac from the mouth of Hunting Creek on the Virginia shore to the mouth of Oxon Creek on the Maryland shore to Frazier's, or Addison's lands.<sup>17</sup> The Fairfax County Court Records show that Hugh West was summoned before the court on May 18, 1753 to explain why he had not built a wharf at the public landing in Alexandria. Ten years later, on July 21, Thomas Saunders was appointed ferry keeper of the Hunting Creek Ferry. In 1769 there was an ordinary at this ferry owned by James Rhodes. After 1769 there is no record of what became of West's Ferry.

One of the first Virginia settlers north of the Great Falls was Philip Noland. In 1748 he lived on the Potomac above the Monocacy River, opposite the mouth of the Maryland Tuscaraora, with his wife, Elizabeth, one of Francis Awbrey's daughters whom he had married in 1725. In November of 1748, Noland petitioned for a ferry license from his land over the Potomac to Maryland. The petition was rejected, but he kept a ferry anyway. For several years there was a bitter rivalry between him and a man named Josias Clapham, who was keeping a ferry not far from Noland's. In 1757 Clapham was given a license for "Hawling Ferry" which for some unknown reason, was soon repealed. Although neither man had a formal license for his ferry, they both continued the rivalry. In 1778 Philip Noland gave the ferry landing to his son Thomas, who eventually received an official license to run it. Soon after, the license for "Hawling Ferry" was formally repealed.<sup>18</sup>

An unfortunate, but at the same time amusing, situation befell John Posey, keeper of "John Posey's Ferry" who kept "two good ferryboats and good attendants to carry passengers from Pamunkey Neck, opposite Mr. Thomas Marshall's in Charles County to Fairfax County in Virginia, which is much the nearest road for travellers going from the lower parts of Maryland to the upper parts, and no winds prevent their passing. Private entertainment also kept at the subscriber's house for man and horse."<sup>19</sup> He formally acquired rights to establish the ferry in November, 1753<sup>20</sup> after having petitioned the court for it in 1752. The court ordered on April 17, 1764 that the ferry road be cleared from Posey's ferry to above Mrs. Manley's Plantation. Four years later, on March 22, 1768, Posey was made Churchwarden of Truro Parish,<sup>21</sup> and five months later on August 21, 1768, the poor man was jailed for debts.<sup>22</sup> The next year (October 23, 1769) George Washington purchased Posey's lands and ferry. The amusement comes from reading the page-long list of antiquated items in the County Records taken from Posey to pay his debts, among them six beer glasses, two pewter chamber pots, and one "speaking trumpet."<sup>23</sup> Permission was given to George Washington in 1790 to discontinue the ferry because it was operating at a loss.<sup>24</sup> The decision was formalized the next year;

"After the 10th of next month no boat will be kept at the ferry called Poseys from the land of the President of the United States to Captain Marshalls, the ferry having been discontinued."<sup>25</sup>

There are three more ferries mentioned in the County Records—Colchester, Court's, and Poultney's ferries. The information available on these ferries is next to nothing. The Colchester ferry (as Mason's Ferry at the Occoquan was later called) had a 1/- (one shilling) charge. Court's Ferry is referred to in two citations: "Road from here to the road from Alexandria to Colchester . . ." and "Road from here to Pohic Church."<sup>26</sup> Although these statements don't make any sense today, they apparently had significant meaning to the eighteenth century Fairfax Court. Court's Ferry was formerly called "Hereford's Ferry" as in 1748 it belonged to John Hereford. The ferry crossed the Potomac from his plantation in Daigs neck "to the lower side of Pamunky in Maryland."<sup>27</sup> A land deed dated August, 1743 in Truro Parish above Goose Creek for 150 acres to John Poultney, may have been the site for "Poultney's Ferry."

Three ferries that are not mentioned in the Court Records are Ashby's, Williams', and Vestal's ferries. All of these crossed the Shenandoah River from Fairfax County to Frederick County, parallel to Ashby's Gap, Williams' Gap, and Vestal's Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains. They are shown on the Fry and Jefferson map of 1755. An expense account of George Washington for April, 1754, lists ferriage to John Vestal, but information as to the founding dates of these ferries was not available.

The number of ferries existing in the Fairfax area has diminished over the years to the sum total of one ferry still in operation on the Potomac today. That ferry is "White's Ferry," or "Conrad's Ferry" as it was known at first. It is located on county route 655 (Loudoun) north of Leesburg. The gradual disappearance of these ferries is due, for the most part, to the modern achievements in transportation, i.e., highways for motorized vehicles, bridges, railroads, and air travel. The early settlers in Virginia had none of these means by which to cross a wide river except perhaps bridges, but the usage of ferries was preferred because

"Whereas, the expense of building bridges over little rivers and creeks, and making causeways in the counties, if levied at several times on the tithables, would scarcely be felt; but is generally too burthensome to be paid at once: And it being a doubt, whether the justices have power to make an annual charge thereof in their levy, several little ferries have been appointed by them, at places where bridges might be built, much more for the convenience of travellers."<sup>28</sup>

The ferries were used to transport tobacco and other commodities, local people and their horses and/or carts, and settlers moving to different areas. There were set fees regulated by the court for all public ferries.

It is unfortunate that only one of the old ferries in this area has remained, but at least the records of their existence are still intact and available to anyone with an interest in them. Hopefully more people will look



at these records (the Fairfax County Court Order Books), especially since they are now being indexed categorically, and will learn more about the people and events that founded Fairfax County.

#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Hening's Statutes at Large, vol. 111, p. 21.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Landmarks of Old Prince William, by Fairfax Harrison, p. 496.
- <sup>4</sup> Fairfax County Court Order Books, Dec. 26, 1749—p. 48.
- <sup>5</sup> Landmarks of Old Prince William, p. 154.
- <sup>6</sup> Journals H. B. 1742-9, p. 261 and Hening, vol. VI, p. 19—Landmarks.
- <sup>7</sup> Fairfax County Court Order Books 1749—p. 133 March 27, 1751.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1749—p. 196, May 21, 1752.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 1754—p. 287, March 18, 1755.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 1756—p. 37, November 16, 1756.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1756—p. 170, November 15, 1757.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 1756—p. 424, November 21, 1759.
- <sup>13</sup> Maryland Gazette, August 12, 1746.
- <sup>14</sup> Hening's Statutes at Large, vol. VI, p. 19.
- <sup>15</sup> Potomac Interlude, by Dorothy Troth Muir, p. 20.
- <sup>16</sup> Fairfax County Court Order Books 1749—p. 139, March 2, 1751.
- <sup>17</sup> Hening's Statutes at Large, vol. VI, p. 19.
- <sup>18</sup> Landmarks of Old Prince William, p. 503-04.
- <sup>19</sup> Maryland Gazette, June 24, 1762.
- <sup>20</sup> Hening's Statutes at Large, vol. VI, p. 375.
- <sup>21</sup> Fairfax County Court Order Books, p. 107—March 22, 1769.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1768—p. 212—August 21, 1769.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 1768—p. 162—June 20, 1769.
- <sup>24</sup> Hening's Statutes at Large, vol. XIII, p. 152.
- <sup>25</sup> Alexandria Gazette, January 27, 1791.
- <sup>26</sup> Fairfax County Court Order Books 1768—p. 279, Dec. 18, 1769.
- <sup>27</sup> Hening's Statutes at Large, vol. VI, p. 19.
- <sup>28</sup> Hening's Statutes at Large, vol. V, p. 175.

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- Harrison, Fairfax. Landmarks of Old Prince William. Berryville, Va.: Chesapeake Book Co., 1964.
- Muir, Dorothy T. Potomac Interlude. Washington: Mt. Vernon Print Shop, 1943.
- Eleanor Lee Templeman and Nan Netherton. Northern Virginia Heritage. Privately published by E. L. Templeman, 1966.

##### COURT RECORDS

- Hening's Statutes at Large. Volumes III, V, VI, and XIII. In Virginia room at the Alexandria Library.
- Fairfax County Court Order Books. Index file cards—topical and name index and deed books. Years 1749-1783. Available at the Fairfax County Central Library.

##### MAPS

- Fry and Jefferson map of 1755.* Drawn by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson. Shows parts of Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and North Carolina. Available at the map division of the Library of Congress. Pickett Street, Alexandria.
- Map of Fairfax County, 1748.* According to bounds established in 1732. Anonymous (possibly drawn by Daniel Jennings) 1748.

##### NEWSPAPERS

- Alexandria Gazette. 1791.
- Maryland Gazette. 1746 and 1762.

# Muster Roll of Captain Edward B. Powell Company, 2 Regiment Cavalry, 6th Brigade, 2 Division, Virginia Militia to August 31st, 1861.

[The actual roll, 17x19 inches, was presented to the Society by Burr Powell Harrison, Leesburg, Va., grandson of Edward P. Powell.]

Name	Rank	Date
Present & absent in alphabetical order		
1. Powell, Edward B.	Captain	1861, April 25th, Fx. Co.
2. Throckmorton, John A.	1st Lieutenant	"
3. Johnston, Samuel R.	2nd Lieutenant	"
4. Triplett, Richard C.	Bvt. 2nd Lieutenant	"
5. McFarland, Frances W.	1st Sergeant	"
(to rank from August 19, 1861)		
6. Stephens, Thomas C.	2nd Sergeant	"
7. Vancamp, Eugene B.	3rd Sergeant	"
8. Thomas, George A.	4th Sergeant	May 1
(Prisoner on July 13th and not yet released or exchanged)		
9. Sherman, James W.	1st Corporal	April 25
10. McCrea, George H. T.	2nd Corporal	"
11. Taylor, John S.	3rd Corporal	May 1st
12. Moore, William F.	4th Corporal	April 25th
(On detached service to the Quartermaster Department, 12th Aug.)		
13. Ballenger, Robert	Private	"
14. Benton, James M.		"
(On detached service to Quartermaster Department from July 1st)		
15. Beach, William H.		May 1st
(Sent home sick on the 10th August)		
16. Brent, Courtney B.		May 25
17. Birch, Joseph		"
(Sent home sick on the 24 July)		
18. Beach, Alfred		May 1st
19. Benezett, Clinton		May 22nd
20. Cook, Enoch		May 1st
21. Church, Henry S.		April 25th
22. Clarvol(?), Napoleon B.		May 1st
23. Dennison, John		April 25th
24. Donaldson, Armistead		May 25th
25. Dyer, Francis		"

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 26. Evans, Oliver P.   | April 25th |
| (Sent home sick on the 22nd July)                                |            |
| 27. Harrison, Luther L.  | May 20th   |
| (On detached service to Quartermaster Department from 21st Aug.) |            |
| 28. Javins, Thomas   | April 25th |
| 29. Jamison, William S.  | June 15th  |
| (Sent home sick August 26th)                                     |            |
| 30. King, William H.   | May 1st    |
| 31. King, George   | April 25th |
| 32. Kirby, Robert  | "          |
| 33. Landstreet, Aristides C.                                     | "          |
| (Prisoner on July 13th and not yet released or exchanged)        |            |
| 34. Leonard, John T.   | "          |
| 35. Minor, Albert  | May 24th   |
| 36. Nevitt, Francis Wm.  | April 25th |
| 37. Nevitt, Thomas H.  | "          |
| (Sent home sick July 28th)                                       |            |
| 38. Padgett, Joseph  | "          |
| 39. Porter, David  | "          |
| (Prisoner on May 24th and not yet released or exchanged)         |            |
| 40. Russell, George  | May 1st    |
| 41. Slagle, Gustavius  | April 25th |
| 42. Simms, Noble   | "          |
| 43. Smith, William   | "          |
| 44. Sorrall, Robert  | May 1st    |
| 45. Veitch, Isaac  | May 25th   |
| 46. Veitch, George   | "          |
| 47. Wrenn, Chas. B.  | "          |
| 48. Wren, William  | "          |
| 49. Wren, Albert W.  | "          |
| (Sent home sick on the 12th August)                              |            |
| 50. Wade, Charles A.   | April 25th |
| (Sent to Richmond Hospital June 10th)                            |            |
| 51. Wheeler, R. Henry  | "          |
| 52. Cook, Mortimer   | May 22nd   |

EDW. B. POWELL,  
Capt. Fairfax Cavalry.

## Members—November 1975

Abbott, Mrs. Jackson M.  
 Aman, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L, III  
 Ames, Mrs. Lawrence M.  
 Anderson, Mrs. Barbara L.  
 Anderson, Miss Ellen L.  
 Anderson,  
     Mr. and Mrs. Richard L., Jr.  
 Ardai, Mrs. Mary P.  
 Alford, Dr. and Mrs. Terry L.

Bachman, Adm. and Mrs. Leo A.  
 Ball, Mrs. Donald E.  
 Barach, Miss Shirley  
 Barrett, Adm. and Mrs. John P. B.  
 Bartlett, Mrs. Kenneth F.  
 Beaven, Mrs. William M.  
 Becker, Dr. and Mrs. Arnold B.  
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 Bennett, Miss Amy  
 Beresford, Mrs. Harry E.  
 Berry, Mr. Dallas O.  
 Berry, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph G., Jr.  
 Billard, Mrs. Pierre  
 Bishop, Mrs. Harley M.  
 Black, Adm. Richard Blackburn  
 Bohan, Mr. and Mrs. Francis  
 Bokel, Mrs. Paul A.  
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 Bolton, Mr. and Mrs. Channing M.  
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 Brockman, Hon. and Mrs. Paul R.  
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 Bryce, Mr. and Mrs. Stewart L.  
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 Buckman, Mr. and Mrs. Horace D.  
 Buffington,  
     Mr. and Mrs. John Victor  
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 Butler, Mr. and Mrs. Scot

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 Carper, Mr. and Mrs. O. V.  
 Carren, Miss Agnes A.  
 Carrigan, Mr. Richard M.  
 Carten, Mr. and Mrs. Leo A.  
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 Caton, Miss Margaret B.  
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 deGanahl, Mrs. Joseph  
 Denis, Mrs. Reid M.  
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 Douglas, Mr. and Mrs. H. H.  
 Downard, Mr. and Mrs. George M.  
 Downey, Mr. William G., Jr.  
 Duncan, Mr. and Mrs. Robert V. H.  
 Dunkum, Miss Ruby F.  
 DuVal, Sen. Clive L., 2nd  
 Dyer, Mr. Kent

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 Freer,

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